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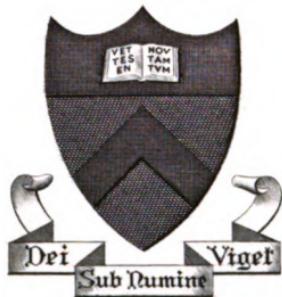
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TRAVELS IN PERSIA,

GEORGIA AND KOORDISTAN;

WITH

SKETCHES OF THE COSSACKS AND THE CAUCASUS.

FROM THE GERMAN OF

DR. MORITZ WAGNER.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE COSSACKS

AND

THE CAUCASUS.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

Stay at Kertch—General Anrep—The Ubiches—Captivity of Baron Turnau among Them—Storming of the Russian Fortress Michailoff—Anrep's Expedition against the Ubiches—The Death of Ali Oku—Life at the Outposts—Circassian Slave Trade.

AT the end of February, 1843, I was staying in the Crimean town of Kertch, situated on the straits, uniting the Black Sea and the Sea of Azof. It is a new, regularly built, airy, and pleasant town, containing more than ten thousand inhabitants, enlivened by trade and shipping, and especially interesting on account of the remarkable antiquities that have been

discovered in its immediate neighbourhood. Archæologists are of opinion that this place was the residence of the Pontian King, Mithridates ; and though not a stone of the old city has been left standing, or even lying on the surface of the ground, their opinion is strongly confirmed by the number of splendid antiquities that have been discovered in various mounds in the neighbourhood of Kertch, containing coffins, ornaments, coins, and arms.

The territory of the Tchernomorski, or Black Sea Cossacks, is only separated from Kertch by a narrow strait, which a vessel can cross with a favourable wind, in an hour. Although the weather was very unpropitious on my arrival at Kertch, and violent storms were sweeping over the Black Sea, whilst heavy clouds were obscuring the horizon, I was able to distinguish from the coast by the roads, the hills that surround the Cossack town of Taman on the opposite shore. But the passage was rendered dangerous on account of the heavy sea ; and no mariner could be found who would undertake to transport my carriage across the straits to Taman. I was, however, in some degree

reconciled to this detention, by the kindness and civility that I experienced at the hands of General Anrep, and of the Governor of Kertch, Prince Kergeolizeff.

General Anrep,* Commander-in-chief of the Russian forces on the Circassian coast, is a man of German descent, about forty years old, with a noble and intellectual countenance. He has inhabited the territory of the Caucasus for several years, has shared in most of the expeditions against the mountaineers during that time; knows the country and the customs of its inhabitants; and was, consequently, in a position to give me much useful counsel relating to the best mode of travelling in the dangerous countries on the Kouban and Terek. The General politely offered me a place on his war steamer, in which, on the return of fine weather, he was about to make a journey of inspection along the whole Circassian coast, from Anapa to Suchum-Kaleh. I was for some time doubtful if I should accept the kind offer of General

* General Anrep served in the campaign of Hungary, 1849, and was defeated by Omar Pacha, at Citate, January, 1854.—*Tr.*

Anrep, but I was ultimately induced to decline it, from my strong desire to become acquainted with the district of the Kouban, where the war continued to rage with undiminished fury between the Circassians and the Cossacks, whilst along the coast of the Black Sea, for some years past, the attacks of the Circassians on the fortresses, and the expeditions of the Russians into the mountains, have almost ceased. Meanwhile, the tempest continued to roar unceasingly, the heavens were as dark as ever, and the angry surges of the Euxine lashed the rocks of the coast with their breakers, the steppes were all under water, and resembled a wide lake, and on all hands, intelligence reached us of numerous shipwrecks.

We spent the inhospitable evening, most comfortably by the tea-kettle. General Anrep listened with interest to my descriptions of military life in Algeria, and to my account of the storming of Constantina, which I witnessed in 1837. After the conclusion of my story, he proceeded in his turn to narrate some of the most stirring episodes of the war in the Caucasus, especially the recent severe conflicts between the Russian

Expeditionary Corps, commanded by the General in person, and the mountaineers of the neighbourhood of Sotsch and Ardler, or Ardiller.

Bodenstedt, who passed only a few hours at the Fort of Sotscha, in 1845, describes it as situated on the coast of the Ubich territory, and generally mentioned by the name of N waginskoje, in the Russian maps. But the German poet was obliged by circumstances to reside at the neighbouring port of Ardiller, (called in Russian: Krepost Sviatago Ducha—the Fort of the Holy Ghost) for more than a week. He says that nothing contributed so much as this visit to open his eyes to the real condition of the Circassians. The commandant of the fortress, Swan Bey, though a Dschigeth by birth, was a major in the Russian service. Having been cast by strange accidents, in his youth, into the Russian service, he had enjoyed the advantages and privileges of a military education at St. Petersburg, had passed his examination as an officer, and had been sent to the Caucasus, where, after some years, he had been promoted to the rank of major. He had fought with distinction against the Tschetschensians, and the people of Daghestan, but nothing could

ever induce him to fight against his own country. He had so completely gained the confidence of the Russians, that they had appointed him Governor of the Fort of Ardiller, on the Dschigeth coast. It was his chief aim in this position, to maintain a good understanding between the Russians and the Dschigeths, and he seems to have been held in equal esteem by both people..

It is partly excusable that Swan Bey regarded the Russians as the greatest, the most powerful and enlightened people in the world, as he knew nothing of the Western Powers, and with this conviction, he strove honestly to impart to his countrymen the blessings of Muscovite civilization. From this man, Bodenstedt learnt many particulars relating to the tribes. He also met there a Polish engineer officer, a man who, like Ulysses, had seen many lands and people, and who had a highly-cultivated mind. This gentleman had been exiled for twelve years to the Abchasan and Adighè territory, and had collected much useful information relating to the mountaineers, whose language, according to Swan Bey, he spoke with astonishing correctness.

Captain X—— was neither the first nor the last of his people whom Bodenstedt met in Promethean exile, in the Caucasus; by avoiding all political allusions, the German poet soon won the esteem, confidence, and gratitude of the unhappy man. His dark, heavy eye, and furrowed brow told more than words could have done. Their conversation revolved exclusively on the Circassians.

The inhabitants of Abchasia and Dschigeth call themselves, in their own language, *Apsua*, and the territory along the coast, *Apsne*. They are classed into princes, noblemen, and peasants. The princes have been called, since the sway of the Georgians, Thawadi; the noblemen, Amystha. From Gagra to Sotscha the inhabitants call their country Chalcis, *i. e.* "this side the mountains," in contrast with Alan, or "the other side the mountains."

The name Dschigeth is a corruption of the word Dschigith, which, according to Swan Bey's explanation, means, in their language, a dexterous cavalier or knight. The Russians have formed two other names out of this—Джурумовамъ (Dschighitovatj), and Джурумовка (Dschigitovka). The Line Cossacks use the

first word to signify a man skilled in military horsemanship, whilst the last is a word of command in pursuing the enemy.

Ardiller has derived its name from the princely race of Ardil, which once resided in this district, but has lived scattered in the interior since the occupation by the Russians. The old name was applied to the new fort by the mountaineers, whilst the Russians, with customary devotion, gave it the appellation of Fort of the Holy Ghost, reminding us of the Spaniards subjugating the Indians in the name of the ever-blessed Trinity. The river which flows into the sea at Ardiller, is called by the natives Mdsym. The term Mdsymtha, with which it is erroneously designated in maps, signifies originally the territory lying on the Mdsym.

The more eminent of the Dschigeths, or Tschigetians, acknowledge Islam, whilst the majority of the inhabitants profess a Paganism, retaining, apparently, many traces of primeval truth, and preferable to caricatures or mutilations of Christianity and Mohammedanism.

The Western Caucasus and the Pontian coast, from the mouth of the Kouban to that

of the Rion, is inhabited by highland tribes, which are generally known by the common name of Circassians, but which present marked differences as regards language. The Adighè are the most numerous of these tribes, residing on the left bank of the Kouban, as far as the district where the Russians have built the Fort Golovinski. These are the people who are especially distinguished among the Russians, as well as the Turks, by the name of Circassians, a term of Turkish origin, unknown to the inhabitants themselves. According to Klaproth, the word means highwayman, or robber. More to the south-west, the coast chain of the Caucasus is inhabited by two tribes, which are almost entirely unknown to us—the Ubiches and the Tschigetians. Though the dialects spoken by the two latter tribes differ from those of their neighbours, the Circassians and the Abchasians, they still appear to belong to the same stock of languages. The Caucasian tribes use mutually, as a common vehicle of their ideas, the Tartaro-Turkish dialect, which is understood by most of the inhabitants along the coast of the Caspian and Black Seas, and has answered the purpose of a commercial

medium, among these bordering races, since time immemorial. South of the Tschigetians, dwell the Abchasians, a numerous tribe, inferior to the northern and eastern Caucasians in patriotic and warlike spirit. Then follow the Mingrelians and Gurians, handsome people, of peaceful disposition, whose language is related to the Georgian, and who, for the most part, consist of Christians. The Ubiches excel all the tribes now specified, in daring and bravery. They possess, in the highest degree, all the heroic qualities, and all the defects that characterize the population of the Caucasus—love of freedom, a fiery spirit, a chivalrous passion for adventures, for the clash of arms, and for glory, which their bards celebrate on their two-stringed lyres, and immortalize through tradition.

They are, however, at the same time, as severe to their prisoners, as rapacious, as revengeful and treacherous as the Circassians. The interior of the territory of the Ubiches is still a real *terra incognita*. The large map of the Russian General Staff leaves a complete blank space between the mountains from which the river Mazumta descends to the Black Sea,

and the district of the Circassian tribe of the Shapsooks. Even the direction followed by the central chain of the Caucasus in this territory, which has never been penetrated by a Russian column, is perfectly unknown.

Only two Europeans have remained for any space of time in the territory of this singular people. The well-known Englishman, Bell, the proprietor of the 'Vixen,' spent some time among the Ubiches in the neighbourhood of the coast. Only one European, Baron von Turnau, Adjutant of General Gurko, succeeded in penetrating into the interior of the Ubich territory, though under very distressing circumstances. Russian officers, who have learnt the dialects, are occasionally ordered by the Emperor to reconnoitre those regions as scouts, partly in order to undertake the topographical survey of a district still entirely unknown to the Russians, partly to examine the strength, institutions, mode of life, and temperament of those tribes which have no intercourse with the Russians. These are very dangerous missions which seldom succeed.

A short time before my arrival on the Terek, four Russian officers of the General Staff had

been dispatched as explorers, into different districts of Lesghistan. They had adopted the Circassian costume, and were accompanied by natives in Russian pay. Only one of these Russian officers ever returned; the three others had been recognized and put to death. Baron Turnau was a long time preparing for his dangerous mission. He gave a brown tint to his face, and transformed his beard to the shape usual with the natives. He also endeavoured to learn the language of the Ubiches. But as the rough pronunciation of several of its words is quite unattainable, Baron Turnau agreed with his guide that the latter should lead him about the country as a deaf mute.

After these arrangements, the Russian officer started on his perilous journey, and wandered many days from tribe to tribe without being discovered. But one of the *works* (noblemen) at whose house he slept, was initiated, for some reason, in the secret, and threatening the guide, the latter betrayed Turnau, who was immediately detained as a captive by the chief. The Ubiches demanded a cap full of silver roubles as his ransom, from the Russian commandant of the fortress of Ardler, and when the latter declared

that he was ready to pay the amount, they raised their demand, and only consented to liberate their captive for a bucket-full of roubles. On hearing this, the Commandant thought it expedient to refer the matter to Baron Rosen, who was then Commander-in-chief of the army of the Caucasus, the matter was laid before the authorities at St. Petersburg, and the Emperor consented that the extraordinary ransom should be paid, and the Baron liberated. But General Rosen represented to Nicholas that it would be favourable to the Russian interest to suffer Turnau to remain some time as a prisoner in the Ubich territory ; for, in the first place, their willingness to pay such an extravagant ransom would be a bad example, and the highlanders would henceforth ask the same sum for all officers who fell into their hands, instead of resting satisfied with some hundred roubles as before ; and secondly, Baron Turnau might have many opportunities as prisoner, of making useful observations on a country which had hitherto remained almost unknown, and thus his captivity would greatly enrich the meagre store of knowledge they possessed of that Circassian tribe.

The young officer was actually sacrificed to this object with incredible heartlessness. He passed a melancholy winter in a painful state of captivity, tortured by cold and hunger, and condemned to the hardest labour as a slave. He made several unsuccessful attempts to escape. The chieftain, who had him in his keeping, to render every attempt at escape impossible, shut him up in a cage which was partially sunk below the surface of the ground, and was moreover so narrow that the prisoner could neither stand up right, nor lie extended in it.

Baron von Turnau lingered on in this distressing captivity, and at length fell dangerously ill, and suffered the most excruciating pains without the hard hearts of his jailors being touched with pity at the sight of his sufferings. His sleepless nights in his cage were not solaced by the visit of a ministering angel, such as is described by Pouschkin in his celebrated poem where he represents a Circassian maiden breaking the fetters of her hero whom she restores to liberty. Many Russian prisoners have, however, had the good fortune to meet with female devotion and love in the Circassian uplands, and have ultimately eloped with their

angels to the Russian lines. Poor Baron Turnau, who resembled a mole driven back and blockaded in its hole, where the very clothes on his back rotted and fell off, was not fortunate enough to excite any tender passion in an Ubich maid, and he would probably have ended his life in prison, without the compensation of a romantic adventure, had not a lucky accident rescued him from his bondage. The chieftain into whose hands he had fallen, having deeply aggrieved one of his retainers, the latter resolved to have his revenge. One day, when all the household were engaged out of doors, this man murdered his master, liberated the prisoner from his cage, fastened him on his saddle with ropes, because the invalid, who was covered with sores, could not sit upright from weakness, and dashed away with him full gallop from the spot. In one day, they accomplished eighty versts. They happily escaped their pursuers, and reached the fortress of Ardler.

Baron Turnau, who only saw a very small portion of the district, describes Ubichia as one mass of steep mountains, presenting the wildest features of the Caucasian region. Immense primeval forests clothe the slopes of the mountains on the side of the Euxine. The Alpine

torrents rush down the deep ravines and chasms, and sweep mighty blocks of rock along with them, and soaring above the woody zone, the summits of the highest chain tower aloft, covered with eternal snows. He represents the situation of the native villages as inaccessible, most of them being either hidden in the bosom of the thickest forests, or perched like eagle's nests on the rocky declivities at the edge of the chasms.

Four Russian fortresses were stormed in 1840, by the united Circassians, Ubiches and Tschigetians. This was one of the most brilliant triumphs ever achieved by the mountaineers over their foes. Nevertheless, the Circassians themselves admit that the defence was desperate. The victors paid so dearly for their conquest, that for several years they lost all appetite for renewing their attacks on the Russian forts. Nor would their assaults have probably succeeded, had not severe disease raged among the garrisons, and sorely reduced them in 1839-1840. As no transports venture to navigate the Black Sea during the winter season, the Russian forts are obliged to dispense with fresh provisions, and to rest satisfied with salt meat during five months. Besides intermittent fever,

these garrisons are frequently visited with a cutaneous disorder, resembling the scurvy, and even if the mortality should not be very great, the body is so debilitated by this malady, that during a convalescence of many months, the invalid is scarcely able to lift his arms. The Circassians had obtained intelligence of the wretched state of these garrisons, through some Polish deserters. A great meeting was held in the mountains, and was attended by several of the most eminent chieftains of the Ubiches and Tschigetians. It was resolved by a majority of votes, to attack the four Russian forts, and they were only to use the schaschka (long sword) without firing a shot. It is a usual practice with the Caucasian tribes on similar occasions, for a picked body of enthusiastic warriors, to devote themselves to death, with the most solemn oath, and to vow that they will never show their back to the enemy. These daring champions always range themselves at the head of the troop, in order that their heroic example may excite the emulation of even the most sluggish, and that their death may entail on their relatives and friends the duty of revenge. Fanatical warriors of this description have been the ready

instruments with which Guz Beg, Mansur Bey, and Dschimbulat among the Circassians, Hadschi-Dokum-Oku among the Ubiches, Chasi-Mollah and Schamyl, in the Eastern Caucasus, among the Tschetschensians, have achieved their most splendid victories over the Russians.

On the occasion of the meeting to which we have previously adverted, and which was held in the Schapsook territory, a hundred of these Caucasian knights, including boys and grey-beards, swore to take the fortresses, or to fall sword in hand on their walls, and they kept their word. Fort Michailoff made the most determined resistance of all. Out of five hundred men composing its garrison, only about one third had retained their health and vigour ; the remainder were on the sick list, or convalescents. But when the wild war cry of thousands of foes rang through the hills and woods, and announced its imminent danger to the garrison, the very soldiers who were prostrate in the hospital, from an attack of fever, jumped up, and crawled as well as they could, gun in hand, to the walls. Whilst the commandant called upon the soldiers to offer up the last drop

of their blood to the Emperor, in the defence of the fort, the old Pope incited them to fight till they fell in the contest against infidels. He administered the sacrament to them, stood in the midst of them holding the crucifix, and was one of the first to fall from the rampart, mortally wounded by a Circassian bullet.

The devoted band of highlanders, who had sworn to conquer or die, had already clambered up the walls, but most of them were tumbled back again into the ditch, struck with bullets, or bayonet thrusts, though they always sold their life very dear. Their corpses formed a bridge for their comrades, and the walls were carried after a fearful slaughter, whereupon the Russians retired, fighting, into the block-house, or inmost defence. Here the commandant collected his men, and requested one of them to volunteer to blow up the fort, if the most determined resistance should be of no avail. A soldier named Archipp-Ossipoff pronounced himself ready to do the work, and was sent to the powder-magazine with a burning match. After the last defences had been stormed, and whilst the Circassians were celebrating their victory, and conveying off captives and plunder,

the explosion took place. Most of the building flew into the air, and many hundred mutilated corpses were scattered in all directions—Russians and Circassians finding a common grave among the smoking ruins of the captured fort. Only eleven Russians survived out of the whole five hundred; and after being dragged into captivity in the mountains, they were eventually ransomed. On their return, they related the dreadful particulars of the assault, and of the catastrophe, which was a commentary on the burning of Moscow.

The intelligence of the loss of these four outposts excited much surprise and discouragement in the Russian army, which had suffered unusual losses, in the same year, from sickness. The Emperor Nicholas was exceedingly enraged at their loss, and as, in such cases, a victim is always required to expiate the misfortune wrought by the enemy's bravery, by the inroads of fever, or by the storms of the Black Sea, Lieutenant-General Rajewski, who then commanded the Circassian coast, was removed from his post, and was succeeded by General Anrep, who had remained in command of this district up to the time of my visit, though the

Commander-in-chief of the Caucasus had been twice changed in the interim. An expedition was undertaken by him, in 1841, against the Ubiches, who had advanced to the shores of the Euxine.

In October, 1841, a column of six hundred Russians assembled at the fortress of Ardler, accompanied by two thousand native auxiliaries, and subject tribes of Abchasians, Imeritians, and Suanetians. The latter are especially distinguished, among all the Caucasian irregular auxiliaries, by the extreme beauty of their physical organization, and by their dexterity and bravery. The Suanetians are nominally Christians, their numbers amount to twenty thousand at most, and their language is reported to be connected with the Georgian. They inhabit the highest Alps of the Caucasus, on the southern side of the Elbruz, and border on the Tartar tribe of Karatschais. Many expeditions of Russian columns against the hostile mountaineers have been escorted by three thousand to four thousand of these native auxiliaries, who are of immeasurable service, from their experience of mountain warfare, from their hardness, bravery, endurance, and familiarity with

the country. The maintenance of these corps is, however, very expensive to the Russians, because they only keep together during the expedition, and nothing but a handsome pecuniary offer can induce these poor mountaineers to leave their homes to join the Russian army. Each of these natives receives a silver rouble and capital white bread daily, whilst he remains under the Russian colours; whereas the poor Russian soldier, who undergoes the same hardships, and is equally exposed to Circassian bullets, must rest satisfied with a copper kopeck, and bread as black as a coal, as his daily pay and ration.

General Anrep wished in the first instance to reconnoitre the road between Ardler and Sotsch (Sutscha) along the coast, without penetrating into the interior of Ubchia. The Ubichians and Tschigetians had collected an army of about 10,000 warriors, and were expecting the Russian advance on their rocky fastnesses. After the skirmishers of the Abchasians, Suanetians, and Imeritians, who formed the Russian outposts had driven in the enemy from the nearest eminences, the Russian column, which consisted almost entirely of infantry, began its march. There

are no corps of Cossack cavalry in the forts on the Black Sea, because the transport of horses is troublesome; and the Cossacks, moreover, accomplish little in mountain warfare.

On the other hand, the column was escorted by some hundreds of Suanetians mounted on excellent horses accustomed to mountain travelling. A strong Russian squadron flanked the march of the column along the sea-shore. The ships of the line were taken in tow by the steamers, and were all to approach within half a cannon shot of the shore, because the expedition was favoured by the finest weather. On the second day's march, more energy was shown by the enemy, who evidently wished to entice the Russians into the interior. The Russian *tirailleurs* were driven in, and some thousands of Ubiches dashed into the Russian column, sword in hand, and uttering fearful cries. This impetuous but disorderly onslaught was naturally broken by the strong line of bayonets that continued to advance in perfect order. Many Ubiches bit the dust from the continual rolling fire of the Russian muskets; but many of the broad-shouldered Muscovites in their grey surtouts were also laid low by the schaschka (sabre)

of the furious mountaineers. The contest was especially desperate wherever the hostile forces came to blows to save a wounded chieftain or carry off their dead.

It is a remarkable fact, that almost all savage tribes have a greater respect for their dead than civilized nations ; that the thought of mutilation or a grave in enemy's ground fills these barbarians with horror ; whilst we view with comparative indifference the desecration of resurrection-men, and the levity of the dissecting room. The Arabs and Kabyles in Algeria are known to encounter the greatest risks, and to make the greatest exertions to carry off their dead in battle ; and in like manner the Caucasian tribes, both Mohammedan and Christian, and even those who have only a faint gleam of religion, exhibit this disposition in a still stronger light. Even a dead slave is unwillingly abandoned to the enemy by the Circassians and Ubiches ; and if they are unable to rescue the corpse, they generally ransom it from the Russians. If we bear in mind the extreme penury of these mountaineers, this sacrifice for the honourable treatment of their dead becomes quite affecting. If a Work (nobleman) or one

of their celebrated champions, or especially a Pschi (prince) falls in action, these highlanders fight like men possessed, in order to save the body, without heeding the explosion of hand-grenades and shells which commonly cause them such terror. Numerous cases are on record, where hundreds of warriors have offered themselves up in such cases to save a single corpse.

One of the most renowned chiefs of the Ubiches is an old Pschi, named Hadschi-Dokhum-Oku, formerly a matchless hero in the handling of cold steel, but now bent with the hardships of war, and the weight of years. This old champion, who is never weary of preaching hatred and revenge against the Russians in the Caucasus, fought, in the days of his prime, at the head of thousands who obeyed his word, while he himself achieved miracles of bravery with his ponderous sword. He often accompanied the forays over the Kouban, with a picked body of men, and was commonly one of the first to plunge with desperate fool-hardiness, into the thickest squadrons of the Tchernomorski Cossacks, and to measure the weight of his schaschka against the red lances of his opponents. He slew many foes with his own

hand ; and his name is coupled with those of Guz-Beg, and Deschimbulat, among the first heroes of the mountains, in the lays of the Kikoakoa,* who celebrate the gallant forays across the Kouban.

The physical strength of the old hero is now broken ; but when he heard of the expedition of the Russians against his native district, he assembled his relations, his friends and retainers, and went forth once more to battle, his body cicatrized with the scars of a hundred wounds. The Russian tirailleurs beheld the venerable form of the old chieftain on a precipitous rock, whence he surveyed the action, issued his orders, and feasted his eyes once more on the gallant actions of his sons and grandchildren, who assisted in this contest, with all their slaves and vassals. The declivities of the Ubich mountains, facing the west, are partly clothed with magnificent forests. Ancient oaks and beech trees tower aloft above the pinnacles and buttresses of the grey rocks which they decorate with their verdure.

Decayed wooden crosses are seen let into

* The name of the Circassian bards.

some of the oldest stems, the relics of an immemorial age, or possibly the pious labour of the Georgian Queen, Tamar, who is reported to have disseminated Christianity throughout the Caucasus, with her victorious arms. The English traveller, Bell, saw in the course of his adventurous excursions in Circassia, several of these crosses on the trunks of the oldest trees, and relates that some fanatical mollahs had once advised that these relics, the symbols of the errors and superstition of their forefathers, should be destroyed ; but that the majority of the mountaineers, who reverence these crosses as holy mementoes of their ancestors, had vehemently resisted this suggestion. Ali Oku a grandson of the old chief, Hadschi-Dokhum-Oku, had posted himself, with his warriors, by one of these oaks bearing the symbol of Christianity, and defended the ground step by step against the Russians.

The position was favourable ; on one hand woody ground, on the other a precipice. The Russian commandant of the hill artillery, who accompanied the light infantry, caused two howitzers to play upon the spot where the Ubiches were congregated in dense masses. A

ball passed through the hollow stem of the old tree, the splinters flew about, but no person was wounded, and the old cross remained uninjured. A yell of triumph was raised by the Ubiches, and rang clear and merry through the welkin. The cavalry of the Suanetians attempted an attack on the same spot, but the ground was too impracticable; the horse of the foremost trooper fell, and bore down two others in its fall, horses and riders both rolling into the abyss below. Even the Imeritian and Abchasian irregulars fell back from this spot, which the enemy defended with incredible rage. At length, a young Russian officer, in command of a company of tirailleurs, rushed forward impetuously, followed by his men, with levelled bayonets. They were received with a volley; the officer fell wounded; the soldiers halted, loaded their arms, and replied to the enemy's volley by another. The contest now raged furiously from rock to rock, from thicket to thicket, and was often settled by cold steel, while a perpetual dropping fire of musketry was kept up on all sides. The Russian skirmishers received reinforcements, and continued to advance steadily; but Ali Oku still held his

ground tenaciously in front of the old oak. Grasping with his left hand the bark of the tree, and swinging his schaschka with his right, he cheered on his men by his words and his gallant example. A Russian bullet passed through the heart of the young hero, who, in death, remained still standing, leaning against the oak, his corpse protecting the sacred tree, whilst its roots were sprinkled by his warm young blood. And then the lament of the Ubiches rose and resounded above the storm of battle, till it reached the ear of the grandfather, who, wearied by the fatigues of the march, was reposing on a rock. When the melancholy news reached the aged chieftain, grief mastered the infirmities of years. Hadschi-Dokhum-Oku gathered up his last remnant of strength, and hastened, with his attendants, to the assistance of the warriors, who were fighting with the Russians for the possession of the body. The old man rushed into the thickest of the fight, like an old lion. The example of the venerable hero inflamed the courage of the Ubiches. Hand to hand, and man to man, the mountaineers and the Russians contended in mortal affray under the shade of that hoary

oak ; the bayonet pierced the breasts of the chivalrous Circassians, and the keen and heavy schaschka splintered the thick skulls of the Muscovites ; at length, the dearly-purchased victory remained with the Ubiches, and the corpse of the young chieftain was saved.

Ali-Oku was only eighteen years old, and had a slight but heroic form. He left behind him a bride of fourteen years, the daughter of a Circassian Prince, who had come to the help of the Ubich, with all his people. The young bride awaited the return of her father in a neighbouring *aoul* (village), with her female relatives, expecting that he would bring back her young bridegroom with him, instead of which, she received the harrowing intelligence of his death.

One week later, the Russian squadron, on its return from Sotsch to Ardler, was sailing again along this part of the coast. A numerous meeting of natives was seen on the declivity of the mountain, where this severe contest had occurred, eight days before. All the chiefs of the Ubiches, Circassians, and Tschigetians who had shared in that action, had assembled to testify their respect for the prince's nephew ; the old grandfather was standing in their midst.

The solemn oath by which they bound themselves to take a bloody revenge was renewed by these brave men in the sight of the Russian fleet. The lamentations and tears of the mother and bride of the departed were mingled and lost in the spirit-stirring songs of the bards, celebrating his gallant life beside his open grave. The young heir was buried beneath that symbol of the cross, which he had covered with his body when he fell.

On my return from Persia, I encountered in the Quarantine Office at Trebizond, Hadschi-Schemis-Beg, a *work* of the Ubiches and a relation of Hadschi-Dokhum-Oku. This chieftain, who was making a journey to Constantinople in the interest of his countrymen, related to me the above episode of the war in Ubichia, with all the animation peculiar to these mountaineers.

The distance from Ardler to Sotsch (Suscha) is only thirty versts* which the Russian expedition accomplished in three days hard fighting. The march of the column was certainly impeded by the steep and woody

* Twenty miles.

nature of the ground, but the prudent measures of General Anrep were able partially to neutralize these obstructions. The auxiliary Abchasians, Suanetians, and Imeritians, answered the purpose of scouts, driving the enemy from their concealment in the bushes and trees, while the Russian tirailleurs followed in their track. The regiments of the line forming the column fired over the heads of the skirmishers, and of the Caucasian auxiliaries, and the guns and mortars of the naval squadron swept the tops of the hills, and every spot where a body of natives was seen to congregate. The continual broadsides of the men-of-war were of material assistance to the column, and several Russian officers assert that without their aid, this expedition might have terminated unfavourably to the Russians.

On the third day, the contest became still hotter and more bitter than on the previous ones. The highlanders had lost many men, and were thus bound by the duty of retaliation which is held sacred throughout the Caucasus to expiate the deaths of their slaughtered brethren, by an equal number of Russian victims. A clever manœuvre on the part of

the Muscovites destroyed the lives of many Ubiches. General Anrep caused a battalion to be concealed in a ravine, and managed by his manœuvring to force the enemy into this ambush. The Circassians finding themselves attacked in the rear, lost courage for a moment, fled to the higher mountains, and contrary to their usual practice, abandoned about a hundred bodies on the scene of combat. But they soon recovered their spirit, and pursued the Russian rear-guard fighting all the way till it reached the walls of Sotsch. The Russians themselves, admit that their loss amounted to five hundred killed in these actions ; the mountaineers suffered principally from the broadsides of the squadron. After the determined resistance that the Russians encountered in Ubchia, they lost all desire of making any fresh attempts to penetrate farther into this unknown mountain region. The only advantage derived from this operation, was a more accurate survey of the section of coast between Ardler and Sotsch. *The Russian general did not think it desirable to send back his troops by land to Ardler*, but had them transported thither by the squadron. Though the loss of the natives was, according to

all appearances, greater than that of the Russians, yet the facts of the case prove that the expedition against the Ubiches, which is the last military operation of any importance that has taken place on the coast of the Black Sea, did not terminate favourably to the Russians.

The foregoing details of the Russian expedition against the Ubiches were related and confirmed to me by various eye-witnesses of the event, whom I met, and with whom I conversed at Kertch, and subsequently in the Caucasus. General Anrep's version of this military operation, agreed with them in the most essential points, though it was naturally somewhat more favourable to the Russians ; and he dwelt with especial complacency on the beautiful manœuvre, (his own device) by which the foe was taken in the rear, and lost many men. The Russian generals in the Caucasus readily inform strangers respecting their successful exploits and victories, but they observe a cautious silence relating to their defeats, and the gloomy future of the Circassian struggle. Formerly they were more communicative with foreigners on these points, and were glad of any opportunities of expressing their opinions freely on these topics to strangers,

provided they were not deterred by the stiff etiquette of rank, and spirit of caste which is in Russia such a serious barrier to all easy intercourse in society. But since Count de Suzannet drew up a long article on the state of the Caucasus, which appeared in the "Revue des Deux Mondes," in 1840, this disposition has undergone a great change. In this article, the Count committed the indiscretion of introducing oral communications of Generals Golovin, Grabbe, Rajewski, and Anrep, which were not always favourable to the position of the Russians in the Caucasus, and compromised these gentlemen at St. Petersburg. The Emperor Nicholas read these revelations of Count Suzannet, was indignant at the unguarded statements of his generals, and sent the obnoxious number of the "Revue des Deux Mondes" to General Golovin, who resided at that period at Tiflis, in the capacity of Commander-in-chief of the army, accompanying the review with the earnest warning that he should be more discreet in future in his communications with foreigners. Since that period, the superior Russian officers who used to be frank and communicative, have become very cautious in their expressions to

strangers. It is only among the subordinate officers who do not belong to the staff, that foreigners can meet with men who give a correct picture of the state of the Caucasus, and who relate the military operations in which they have shared, without disguise. I was fortunate enough to meet with a man of this stamp in * * * *, and his attractive conversation whiled away the tedium occasioned by my detention through the continuation of bad weather.

The Russians possess, at present, seventeen strongholds on the east coast of the Black Sea, from Taman to the borders of Guria. They call these strongholds *kreposts*, which means fortresses, but they seldom deserve this appellation. Most of them consist of simple earthen parapets, a shallow ditch and a wall, behind which are built the barracks, the church, and the officers' dwellings. These *kreposts*, which are almost identical with the French *camps retranchés* of Algeria, could not resist the assault of regular troops provided with artillery. But the mountaineers of the Caucasus, like the Arabs of Algeria, have it not in their power to use breaching batteries against them, and the earthen walls of the forts, furnished with

guns of heavy calibre, are a formidable obstacle to the native warriors, armed with swords and muskets only. Some of these strongholds are built on rocks, and defended by nature. Their garrisons commonly consist of 500, and seldom exceed 1,000 men. Life, in most of these fortresses, is indescribably monotonous and melancholy. On the land side it is impossible to take a short walk without imminent danger of your life, unless you are escorted by a hundred soldiers. A mountaineer is sure to lie concealed behind every bush and on every rock, waiting day and night to send his bullet through the body of some unhappy pedestrian. The traveller, Dubois, relates that during his residence in these forts, the windows were often smashed by Circassian bullets, which occasionally forced their way into the *salle-à-manger* of the officers.

The situation of the garrisons is somewhat more supportable in summer, because a Russian squadron cruises along the coast, and a regular line of steam-boats provide them with fresh provisions and various conveniences. The garrisons are enlivened by the arrival of newspapers and visitors, who place the unfortunate

victims in a state of spiritual communion with Europe and the civilized world; but the long winter, which lasts seven or eight months, is a dreary season for the garrisons. The squadron returns to Sevastopol in October, and steam-boats seldom venture across in winter, on account of the furious storms and complete deficiency of good anchorage on that coast. During this season the garrison, lead a real prison life; their food is salt meat; their occupation and diversion consists in looking at the snowy mountains or listening to the roar of the breakers. The officers obtain a slight mitigation of this captivity, in reading, whist-parties, punch, and the steaming tea-kettle; but the poor privates, who lie in wretched barracks which admit the chill mountain air, and who suffer from a real deficiency of fuel, are in a most deplorable position. It is well known that after the suppression of the last Polish insurrection, many young men, some of them belonging to the noblest families, were sent as private soldiers to the Caucasus and distributed among various Russian corps.

Let the reader imagine the misery of these unhappy youths; clothed in a coarse soldier's

coat, groaning under an iron discipline, condemned to common black bread and salt meat, immured in these solitary forts, amongst rough Russian peasants' sons as their comrades, from whom they are alienated by natural hatred, notwithstanding the affinity of race. Can we wonder that many in this deplorable position resorted to suicide, the last expedient of desperation. Dubois, who generally conceals what is unfavourable to Russia in the Caucasus, relates that during his residence at the krepost Gagra, a Pole of the garrison jumped from the walls of the fort over the precipice and was dashed to pieces, that he might put an end to his wretched existence. Those Poles who fly to the mountains do not improve their lot thereby; they are condemned to slavery by a hard-hearted people, who are incapable of forming any distinction between Russians and Poles. Indeed, life in the Caucasian mountains appears to be more intolerable than the hardships of a Russian soldier, for many deserters return of their own accord, though a barbarous and disgraceful punishment awaits them. In some fortresses, for example, Anapa, Gelendschik, &c., the lot of the garrisons is not quite so painful, because they

are not closely blockaded there, and carry on some commercial intercourse with the neighbouring Circassian tribes ; but no description can give an idea of the desolate and irksome life spent by the garrisons of the forts Williaminoff, Lazareff, Suscha, Ardler, Gagra, and Pitzunda. In Abchasia the Russian fortresses can breathe a little more freely. The precincts of the fort of Redout-Kaleh can be safely visited to the distance of some versts ; and on the coasts of Mingrelia and Guria, the Russian garrisons are exposed to no other danger save that of a deadly fever.

It is well known that the object of the erection of a chain of forts along the Circassian coast, was to extinguish all intercourse between the Turks and the tribes of the Caucasus. The Russians hoped that by cutting off all supplies of ammunition from the Circassians on the sea-side, it would be no very difficult matter to subjugate the mountaineers. They have been disappointed in this expectation, and the position of the Russians has not been improved by their maintaining a body of fifteen or twenty thousand men in their different posts along the coast.

Every fort possesses some row boats, which,

manned by Cossacks, coast along the shore, in fine weather, in search of any little Turkish vessels that may have ventured thither. If they discover any, they land at night in the neighbourhood and try to set fire to them before the mountaineers can come down to help the Turkish crews. The Turks, who know these tactics of the Cossacks, do all in their power to withdraw their vessels out of the sight of the Russian row-boats, and to this end they frequently cover the whole of their craft with leaves and branches, and suspend twigs of fir to the masts to make the boats' crews fancy they are trees.

If any credit may be placed in the statements of the Russian generals, the slave trade between Circassia and Turkey has almost ceased. But such is not really the case, and I obtained a correct account of the real state of the case from well-informed men during my last residence at Trebizond. The trade with Circassian girls is still carried on as extensively as before, only it requires more circumspection, and is confined to the stormy winter months, lasting from October to March, during which the Russian cruisers remove from the havenless coast. The spectator

is filled with astonishment on viewing at Samsun and Sinope the small fragile barks in which the Turkish slave-dealers venture on their adventurous voyages during this most perilous season. These slavers commonly furnish themselves with a charter from the Russian consul for Kertch, under the pretext of shipping a cargo of corn at that place ; and they are protected by this document if they fall into the hands of Russian men-of-war on the passage, or if they are cast away on the coast in the vicinity of the Russian fortresses. Unless they were provided with these charters, they would be treated as slave-traders by the Russian cruisers, and even transported to Siberia. The vessels they employ are so small, that if the sea is at all calm, and the shore flat, they can be drawn up on land.

It is commonly assumed that these Turkish ships supply the Circassians with ammunition ; but this is a mistake. The Turkish slave-traders very seldom bring any arms to the Caucasus, and these consist commonly of ornamental arms as presents for the chief ; nor do they bring much powder, and only as a present to the princes and knights.

The Circassians will not engage in barter, and they only hand over their beauties for Turkish harems, against good bright silver. The tribes of the Caucasus are not deficient in fire-arms as well as kinschals and schaschkas (swords), and they find opportunities of buying powder and lead on all hands, even from the Cossacks on the Kouban. It commonly takes a couple of weeks for the slave-traders to complete their arrangements with the Circassians; the Konak answers the purpose of mediator. It is generally only the daughters of (pschilt) slaves, and tschofokotls (freed men), who are sold to the Turks; rarely does a work (nobleman) resolve to exchange his sons and daughters for shining piastres; yet this sometimes happens.

The girls commonly leave their rugged mountains and inhuman parents without much regret, because they have been carefully prepared for this forcible separation, by the splendid picture that their relatives give of the enjoyments and magnificence of a Turkish harem. Each vessel carries a full cargo of thirty or forty girls, who are packed close together like herrings in a tub, and submit with great resignation to the

distress of the sea-voyage, which they hope soon to exchange for the delights of the City of the Sultan.

The captains are well versed in all the characteristics of the Black Sea. Once or twice a month in winter, a fresh wind blows down from the Caucasus, lasting generally several days consecutively. The Turkish captains make use of this wind to get off as rapidly as possible with their living cargo. They commonly transport the girls to Riseh, or to Sinope and Samsun, but never direct to Trebizond, for the Russian consul there, M. de Gersi, keeps a tolerably vigilant eye on the shipping ; and though he may secretly connive at the trade, he will not suffer it to be carried on too boldly before his very face.

It is computed, that, on the average, five out of six vessels accomplish their mission. It is reported that during the winter from 1843 to 1844, twenty-eight vessels undertook expeditions to the Circassian coast. Out of this number, twenty-three returned without loss or hindrance ; three were burned by the Russians, and two foundered at sea with their cargo of beauty. A Turkish captain at Sinope related

to me the following story:—A few years ago one of these slave-ships sprung a leak in the open sea, just as a Russian steamer, coming from Redout-Kaleh, happened to sail by. The Turkish captain, who preferred the prospect of the cold air of Siberia to that of drowning, hung out a signal of distress, and the Russian steamer came up to save the slave-ship and its living cargo. But so deeply rooted is the hatred of Russians in the Circassian heart, that the noble blood of these maidens rebelled at the thought of becoming the property of a Muscovite grey coat, instead of sharing the couch of a proud and luxurious Turkish pacha.

These girls, who had taken leave of their mountains without much emotion, raised a fearful cry of anguish when the Russian ship drew nigh. Some jumped desperately into the sea, others plunged a knife into their breast—death being more welcome to these heroines than the marriage-bed of the detested Muscovite. Nevertheless, the greater part of them were taken on board the Russian ship, and brought to Anapa, whence the girls were forwarded to the land of the Cossacks, and partly granted as handmaids to the officers, partly distributed among the

Cossacks of the line. Only one single man of the Turkish crew came back, having succeeded in escaping from prison at Anapa, and in flying to the mountains. It is probable that the remainder were forced to make a pilgrimage to Siberia, for nothing has been heard of them since.

Almost every Turkish and Austrian steamer that makes the passage from Trebizond to Constantinople, along the coast of Asia Minor, in winter, has a number of Circassian girls on board. The Turkish slave-traders commonly bring their goods from Rizeh or other harbours of Lasistan to Trebizond, and, to tranquillize the scruples of M. de Gersi, the Pacha assures him that these girls come from Adschara and Lasistan; for the shocking practice of trading in girls is prevalent also among the inhabitants of that part of the coast. In Trebizond they are handed over to the steamers as fore-deck passengers. I once made the journey myself from Trebizond to Constantinople, on an Austrian steam-boat, with a dozen Circassian girls. They were mostly children of from twelve to fourteen years of age, with interesting and noble features, but very pale and thin, and a wild fire glowed in

their black lustrous eyes. Only two of them, who were much better dressed than the others and carefully veiled, showed a certain roundness of contour ; they appeared eighteen or twenty years old. The Turkish slave-trader devoted especial attention to the latter, and often brought them coffee, a luxury never enjoyed by the others. When I asked the Turk why this distinction was made, he informed me that those two girls who had better clothing, were the daughters of noblemen, with beautiful rosy cheeks, and better fed than the others, and, consequently, they would fetch a higher price at Stamboul. He hoped to sell the handsomest for thirty thousand and her companion for twenty thousand piastres. He spoke contemptuously of the others, and stated that he should consider himself fortunate if he could dispose of them at two thousand piastres (£16) per head. This Turkish trader was very richly attired in furs and silk, and, notwithstanding his vile occupation, he appeared a man of very sociable manners. He informed me, among other things, that since the occupation of the Caucasian coast by the Russians, his trade had become much more difficult and dangerous, but also much more

lucrative. At an earlier period, when numbers of Greeks and Armenians were brought to the market at Constantinople, the handsomest girl never fetched above ten thousand piastres ; but now a well-fed rosy slave from Guria or Adschara, about fifteen years of age, could scarcely be obtained at Stamboul for forty thousand piastres.

* * * *

* * * * The Black Sea had at length somewhat calmed down, and a sailor of the packet-boat knocked at my door to inform me that they were about to start. I found the good-natured captain waiting my arrival on the deck. A fresh breeze bore us swiftly away from Kertch ; the rain continued to pour down, and I was forced to seek refuge in the cabin, where I met some compensation for the unpleasantness of the weather in some capital caviare and Crimean wine. Though I retained very agreeable recollections of the Crimea, yet I managed to leave it without shedding a tear, and I sailed away in a merry mood for the Land of the Cossacks.

CHAPTER II.

Scythian Storms—Cossack Comfort—Fanagorian Antiquities
—Cossack Life—The Story of Wassily Iguroff, the Demon
of the Steppe—Danger of a New Irruption of Barbarians
in the West.

FATHER PROMETHEUS had really good cause to warn his liberator against the fierce blasts of the land of the mare's-milk-drinking Scyths. I do not mean to doubt that the wandering demi-god stood very firmly on his legs, or that his entire frame was cast in a solid and powerful mould. But if Hercules, on his pedestrian tour northwards of the Black Sea, encountered a March gale, like that which I experienced on my arrival at Taman, he must,

at any rate, have been famously shaken and weather beaten, if he was not blown straight away to the moon, as Prometheus feared to be:

“ Beware of the sweeping blast of Boreas,
Lest it suck thee up in its raging vortex.”

This was one of those good cheap bits of advice, that the liberated Titan gave to the travelling club-man on his way to the Caucasus. Æschylus has omitted to relate if the son of Jupiter, while facing this windy prospect, made as sour a face or as sorry a figure as the writer of these pages, when after a tempestuous passage of the straits, he landed sea-sick in the Cossack town of Taman, and heard that there was no such thing as an inn there. But, even at this remote epoch, I cannot withhold a sigh when I think of the deplorable situation of Master Hercules on his arrival at this place, only moderately furnished with luggage as usual, and at any rate, unprovided with a well-lined great-coat, a paletot and gutta percha boots, without a trunk or carpet-bag, without any luggage but his club, perhaps even without the classical *padaroschna*,* for want of which

* Imperial permit, or *passe-partout*.

the Scythian postmasters would all refuse him their horses. But his greatest calamity would be the probable deficiency of silver roubles in his purse. I assume, of course, that household arrangements were not much more comfortable in this corner of the Black, Sea at the period in question, than they are now, and that the Scythians, addicted to a mare's milk diet, were as deficient in inns, as prodigal of stenches, filth and fleas in their houses, as their descendants, the brandy-drinking Cossacks.

"But can no better shelter be found in the whole place?"—I ejaculated, in a most melancholy tone, whilst I dragged my portmanteau from one corner of the room to another, in order to remove it from the streams of water pouring through the roof. The Cossack landlord of this enticing cottage, who had been prevailed upon to become my *konak*, or host, stared at me with an expression of mingled astonishment and contempt. It seemed to him quite unaccountable that such trifles as a wet bed, a smoky room, and vermin should occasion the slightest uneasiness or discomfort.

It is here proper to observe, however, that my present expedition through the Cossack

territory took place a year before my travels in the interior of Asia Minor, and in the wretched country of the Kurds, so that I was not half sufficiently hardened against the hardships and troubles to be encountered in a semi-barbarous country. I grant that I had experienced some specimens of "roughing it in the waste" during my tour in Algeria, and my wanderings among the Arabs. But the French are greatly in advance of the Russians, and of all other nations in the speedy introduction of conveniences and comforts at the outposts and in the wilderness.

Notwithstanding all their discomforts, however, the Cossacks are far from unsociable or unamiable people. The Russian captain, who brought me over to Taman, indulged in a good deal of gossip in the little town, after our arrival, and found an attentive audience among the Tschernomorski Cossacks. He had asserted, probably from motives of vanity, that his passenger was a man of high birth, who was well provided with written and stamped papers from St. Petersburgh, and had been recommended to him both by the Governor and the Commandant of Kertch.

Statements of this nature are seldom thrown

away in Russia, and my bearded host, though inwardly disaffected towards me, yet seeing my long moody face, hurried off through the little town to find dry quarters for me. He discovered a suitable abode in the house of a Tschernomorski officer, who gave up his best room to me, and received me with Cossack hospitality of the old school. He was a veteran, wore the cross of Vladimir, and was married to a third wife, a young blue-eyed and extremely pretty little woman, to whom God had given the greatest of female charms—an amiable temper.

Whilst the *samovar* (Russian tea-kettle) was bubbling and singing, the torrents of rain began to slacken, the dark clouds had rolled away from the Black Sea, and the heavy gale alone continued to lash the angry surges through the straits of the Bosphorus. After I had been strengthened by the tea, I wrapped myself in a rough burka, made my bow to the worthy couple, and hurried off to Fanagoria, where I hoped to meet with a countryman.

Fanagoria is a Russian fortress, which, according to an antiquary named Kohler, stands on the site of the ancient Pontian city of Phana-

goria, and this conjecture is supported by the discovery of monumental inscriptions. The whole of this Tauri-Scythian coast contains numerous archæological remains, and we cannot help regretting that the excavations, once actively carried on here, at the expense of the Russian Government, have been lately neglected. When it was observed that every excavation did not infallibly lead to the discovery of splendid gold trinkets, coins, arms, &c., of the age of Mithridates, the zeal for these researches slackened very materially.

I heard many amusing stories about the way in which the Russian functionaries carried on their researches. On one occasion a marble sarcophagus was discovered, which was destined for the archæological collection at Moscow. The employé charged with its transport found that the weight of the ancient coffin was excessive, and caused a large piece of it to be struck off; after which operation, the mutilated sarcophagus reached its destination. Another sarcophagus was converted into a water trough. But the supreme government is not to be blamed for this vandalism. The Ministers on the Baltic are entirely incapable of superintending the details

of the functionaries on the Sea of Azov. "Les distances sont le fleau de la Russie," said the Emperor once to the Marquis de Custine.

Fanagoria is now an insignificant and a tedious place. The garrison consists of Russian invalids, who are in no danger of an assault from the Circassians, on account of the distance of the Caucasus. I had been recommended to the town apothecary by a friend at Kertch, and his name had such a German sound that I hoped to find that he could speak my mother-tongue. In this, however, I was disappointed, for though he was of German descent on his father's side, his mother had been a Pole. Nor did his wife, who was a native of Galicia, know much more of my language. Nevertheless, he had a clean and pleasant house, very neatly furnished, and his geraniums and roses were quite a relief after the Cossack filth at Taman. The apothecary was a worthy and a happy man; yet he had one ambition, one ideal, to which all his wishes were directed. It was the ribbon of St. Ann in his button-hole, which would raise him a step in the Tchin. "There is no system," writes a Slavonic writer, "which encourages personal

ambition and egotism like this. The constant hope of rank, decorations and orders of all kinds, which increases with its gratification, becomes at length the all-engrossing idea of life, obstructing all spontaneous spiritual development, and turning man into a machine, moved according to the whim of government."

There are millions in Russia like the apothecary of Fanagoria, who are quietly, but absolutely, governed by the lust for decorations. Greedy Armenians, whose god is money, have been known to spend large sums to obtain the cross of St. Stanislaus, and I have known men who have given more than ten thousand roubles (£1,660) for an order. The copper cross of St. George is of no pecuniary advantage to the private soldiers, yet they wear it with unspeakable gratification over their grey great-coats. Peter the Great, by introducing the Tchin system, has inoculated the whole people with an unbounded passion for external distinction. This becomes a still more powerful lever in the hands of Government, than enthusiasm, love of glory, or of country. This simple, worthy apothecary, who in England might have been the counterpart of Dickens'

creation, the harmless Pinch, would probably have faced 24-pounder batteries, like those at the battle of Eylau, to get the cross of Vladimir, or the diploma of the sixth class.

When I awoke the next morning under the hospitable roof of the apothecary, I found, to my sorrow, that the sky was as dark, and the weather as stormy as ever. This occasioned me much annoyance for many reasons, among others, because it prevented my visiting the renowned mud volcanoes, situated half a day's journey from Fanagoria. One of the most remarkable of these is the Kuku Oboo, (in Tartar signifying Blue hill, and called by the Malo-Russians, Pakla, hell), which was visited, in 1794, by the naturalist, Pallas, during a violent eruption. The mass of mud cast out on that occasion covered the country for the space of a verst (two-thirds of a mile). These phenomena, and the frequent occurrence of mineral springs in the Caucasus, show the volcanic character of the whole region.

During my involuntary detention at Fanagoria, I went over every day to Taman to inquire about the arrival of ships from Kertch. One day, as I was standing on the strand,

wrapped in my burka,* looking over at the Crimean coast enveloped in mist, and disregarding the steady shower-bath to which I was exposed, I was accosted in good French by a Cossack officer, decorated with the St. Ann's order of the second class. Delighted to meet a person who could chat readily in a familiar idiom, I returned the salutation of this polite stranger, whose features and uniform immediately pronounced him to be a Don Cossack, and, consequently, almost a stranger in this district. After explaining to him my sorrows in the detention of my carriage and luggage at Kertch, this friendly man recommended three cures for my troubles—patience, a smoking bowl of punch, and a cheerful conversation by the warm fireside, till the heaven showed its blue once more, and the sea sank into a calm.

To this end he invited me to enter his little house, where I could dry my burka, whilst he provided for the creature comforts and the gossip. This proposal was not unwelcome to me, and I followed him into a neat stone

* Rough great coat.

house, close at hand. We placed ourselves comfortably before the blazing fire. To the left was suspended, in the corner, the large picture of a saint, adorned with gilding, and to the right, the portrait of Nicholas ; before us, on the fire, was bubbling an earthen punchbowl of colossal dimensions. The travelling companion of the Don Cossack Major, a staff officer from Stavropol, had prepared the jovial potation during his absence, and showed himself a true master in the noble art.

“ *Mais vous buvez comme une demoiselle !* ” bawled out the Cossack, when he saw that I paid only a moderate court to his fire-water, whilst he drank it up in copious draughts.

As I was desirous, however, of finding my way back to Fanagoria in the dark, I determined to be abstemious. Nevertheless, I admit that I was put to shame by this bearded Cossack ! Thrice did he fill and empty a mighty goblet without the least effect, though his belaced and gilded comrade soon showed in his reddening face the influence of the potent drink. The Major of Tscherkash, as before related, wore the St. Ann’s order of the second class ; but I am persuaded that if ever a punch,

arrack, or schnapps order is founded in Russia, he will be sure to obtain a first class. This man was the greatest toper I ever met with, save a Turkish cavass, who escorted me from Erzeroum to the Persian frontier.

These two Russian officers appeared charged with some special commission, and were regarded by the Tchernomorski Cossacks with fear and trembling. The Stavropol staff-officer belonged to a noble Moscow family, was a man of refined manners, and spoke French without the least foreign accent, but it was easy to perceive that the Cossack major had only received some kind of cultivation in later life, and his civilized exterior occasionally gave way before an explosion of old Cossack frankness and vehemence. He spoke French with a Slavonic accent, having only acquired it during his campaign in the west, and he had something so jovial and hearty about him, that I got on much better with him than with his more refined but straight-laced companion. He told us countless anecdotes, merry or melancholy, as the case might be, relating to his campaigns ; he described his impressions of Germany and France, uttered his judgments on armies and their leaders, related

numerous interesting anecdotes about the Russian generals Platoff, Benningsen, Miloradovitsch, Kutusoff, Rajewski, Jermoloff, &c., and wound up with a circumstantial description of his former condition and mode of life at his home on the Don, and with the life and deeds of his grandfather—a narration which was especially rivetting from the warmth with which it was pourtrayed. All soldiers who survived the wars of Napoleon had a large store of interesting experiences, but I have known few who could describe their experience with so much warmth and freshness as this veteran. His foreign pronunciation of French rather heightened than lessened the charm of his narrative. He was probably a man of sixty, judging from his white hair, but strong and vigorous withal, notwithstanding many tough blows received in war. Though all his tales were uncommonly interesting, I shall only present the reader with the biography of old Iguroff, his maternal grandfather, precisely in the form in which I wrote it in my pocket-book, when it was fresh in my recollection :

“ If your travels,” began the Cossack, “ should ever lead you to my home on the Don, do not

confine your visit to Novo-Tscherkask ; go farther south, and especially penetrate as far as the steppes between the Don and the Manytsch, and the banks of the Sal ; there you will find some of the old Cossack manners which are quite worth observing, and possibly you may meet still with men whose figure and mode of life may call to mind my grandfather, who was the genuine type of the Cossack of the old school. To the south of the Don, and on its right bank, where the great mass of our tribe now dwell, all is changed. Novo-Tscherkask would only give you a picture of altered and corrupt manners. It is the head-quarters of a bad population that has degenerated from its forefathers, to which, I am sorry to say (here a sigh and another gulp), I also belong. The enjoyments and vices of civilized nations have found their way amongst us for half a century. Bankruptcy and malversation, gambling, champaign and adultery, are as common now on the Don as on the Seine, whilst the arts, sciences, and noble ornaments of civilization have not yet found their way to us. But the farther you go from the capital, the deeper you plunge into the heart of the Steppes, the more frequently will

you encounter a breath of the spirit of our fathers, albeit mixed with some roughness ; and this breath will do you more good than all the artificial refinement, which you may meet at Taganrog and Tscherkask. On the left bank of the Don you find Cossack families scattered in solitary straw and reed huts, or dwelling in tents during the summer, who rove about leading almost as nomadic a life as their neighbours the Calmucks. My family originates on my mother's side, from that district, including my ancestor Wassily Iguroff, 'the Stiepa-Tschort (Steppe Devil), one of the most remarkable men which the wonderful world of the Steppes has ever produced.

" Our people on the Don were, as you know, for ages a free people—*i. e.*, serfdom has never existed among us. It is asserted that we Cossacks are a mixture of Sclavonic, Circassian and Tartar elements, and that our language shows that Russian emigrants contributed the chief element of the compound. Yet, our social condition has always been so entirely different from that of the fore-named races, that we have never had amongst us Muschiks, as among the Russians and Poles, nor Pschilts and

Tschofokots, as among the Circassians, nor a trace of the manners and customs of the odious Moguls. The Cossacks, save in Ukraine, formed a complete republic before Peter the Great. The land of their boundless steppe was common property, and belonged to all who chose to till the ground, or to speculate in herds of wild cattle and horses, as Tscheredniks and Taboontschiks. But though we had no genuine landed aristocracy, entire social equality did not exist amongst us, and some families maintained a superior influence in peace and war.

“ Amongst these families that of the Iguroffs, my maternal grandfather’s, was especially conspicuous. Their superior influence was not founded on heraldic devices or parchment rolls, but rested alone on their strong arms, which had wielded the ponderous lance from time immemorial: it depended also on their impetuous valour, on the wealth of their herds, their numerous relations, and the large clan of gallant warriors, friends and retainers that they could lead into the field.

“ Often did the Iguroffs carry on war of their own accord against the Tartars of the Golden Horde, or against the Nogay Tartars, subject to

the Khans of the Crimea, without having asked leave of the Hetman previously. Whosoever had a lust for booty or Nogay skulls joined the banners of the Iguroffs on these occasions.

"On the Don and the Manytsch, the belief prevailed throughout the land, that the god of war smiled with especial favour on this family, and that they seldom came back from their forays with empty hands. Sometimes matters turned out quite differently, when the Hetman marched forth with a whole army, and found the enemy prepared to meet him. Nevertheless the Iguroffs were at length rendered foolhardy by their good luck, which, however, suddenly met with a fearful check. Their daring rendered them careless, and they advanced, continually farther into the Nogay Steppes in order to drive off herds. Once they advanced, late in the year, as far as Perekop. They made a great booty, but an immense swarm of Nogay horsemen awaited their return, and cut off their road to the Don.

"The Cossack horses were tired and half-starved, for a heavy fall of snow had deprived them of the forage of the Steppe, whilst the Nogay horses appeared in the field in high

condition. Our long-maned horses would now have had no chance in a race with the swift Tartar steeds, hence the contest must be decided by cold steel—the scymetar against the lance. The conflict was desperate, but did not last long, for the great superiority of the enemy soon overpowered our party.

“ My grandfather Wassily was one of the first who fell ; his hard skull had been unable to withstand the still harder steel of a Nogay warrior. The fearful carnage ended with a massacre of the whole band of Cossacks. More than a hundred cavaliers, all bearing the name of Iguroff, bit the dust, together with three times that number of their friends and acquaintances who had joined that ill-starred expedition. My grandfather was the only survivor of the catastrophe. He lay with his skull half split, under his mortally wounded horse, with the snowy ground for his couch. Whilst his furious enemies were striding over the bodies of the slain and cutting off their heads, for which they obtained a handsome consideration from the Khan at Baktchi-Serai, Wassily, who had returned to consciousness, buried himself under the snow. He used to relate that he

owed his life entirely to his horse. The faithful animal lay some time quietly breathing, and the long hairs of his mane concealed the fallen rider from the hawk's eyes of the Nogays.

"After Wassily had covered himself with snow, the dying horse rolled over the spot where his master was concealed, and thus effaced every trace of his being buried there; then it continued to lie quietly as before, till it breathed for the last time. The Nogays took its bridle and saddle, without noticing the rider concealed beneath, and left the bloody field with much booty, and a crop of Cossack heads.

"My grandfather lay a good while unconscious under his snowy counterpane. The action had taken place at daybreak, and when he came to himself, the midnight moon shone over the steppe. The snow which had covered his head appeared to have staunched the bleeding of his wound, and to have had a beneficial effect on it. He only felt a dull pain in his brain, but no bodily weakness, and after tying his sash round the wound, he came forth from his snowy lair. A fearful spectacle then met his view. The bodies of the slain, the corpses of his father, his brothers, cousins, friends lay

stiff and stark-naked, and headless trunks stretched over the steppes. Wolves and jackals had assembled to the banquet, and were howling and gnawing the bodies in the moonlight. The tremendous bass voice of my grandfather dispersed the beasts. He sought out the body of his father amongst the dead, recognizing it by a scar on his hand, and he buried it under the snow to save it from the teeth of the wolves. Then he pursued his way across the steppe, which was familiar to him even by night. Luckily he found a sound horse, which had escaped from the Nogays, after the fall of its rider, and was engaged in breaking through the snow with its hoofs to satisfy the cravings of hunger. Our horses always recognize us by a peculiar whistle. Hence the animal let itself be easily caught, and bore my father to the Don, after galloping hard all night. He must have been lost but for this fortunate accident; for he was never much of a pedestrian, and the mounted Nogays would assuredly have overtaken him in the steppe the following day.

“Mourning amongst the men of the Don differs widely from yours in the West. There is not much sighing or crying with us, especially

in the case of warriors, who have found a glorious death on the battle-field. We leave lamentation to the women, and praying to the priests ; and after the body has been lowered into the earth, and we have cast a handful of earth over it, we assemble with our relatives and friends to drink, smoke, and chat ; we relate the adventures of the departed, we praise, if possible, his good qualities, his piety, his courage, and his prowess ; and we think to do greater honour to him thus than by tears and masses.

“ Thus it happened also with Wassily Iguroff, when he returned alone of all the four hundred and related his sad story. He obtained forthwith a large inheritance from his father and childless relations, consisting of horned cattle, horses, ornaments, and a considerable sum of money, besides a good supply of vodka or brandy skins, a drink held in high repute among us since time immemorial, and at that time an expensive beverage. Wassily devoted his great supply of brandy to celebrate the funeral of the departed. (I much fear that our young people, especially the rich, will shortly renounce brandy for wine, punch, and especially champagne.)

“ Thousands of guests hurried up from both

banks of the Don to hear the story of his defeat from his own mouth, and to do honour to his liquor. Whilst the Cossacks were assembled in front of our ancestral abode, were slaughtering and devouring lambs, and celebrating the memory of the departed according to their fashion, Iguroff was lying on his couch within, suffering from his wound fever; but after three days he had so far recovered that he could leave the house and contend with his friends in a drinking match. Suddenly he raised his stentorian voice in the midst of the funeral banquet, challenging the assembly to avenge the slaughtered heroes. The Cossacks, inflamed alike by the fiery vodka and his stirring appeal, tore the pictures of the saints from their naked breasts, and swore retaliation with tremendous oaths. The horses were saddled in the midst of a terrific whirlwind of snow; thousands of avenging lances plunged into the icy flood of the Don, and my father, swimming at their head, landed first on the right bank, amidst a thundering hurrah! They then swept off to the Nogay land, like a pack of wolves.

“The two eldest sons of Wassily, though still young boys, were forced to ride with them.

Though still too tender to engage in the fight, they were to be witnesses of the bloody revenge. After riding hard, day and night, without stopping, our people reached a Nogay encampment, containing a part of those who had shared in the massacre and the booty of the Iguroffs. Day had not yet dawned, and the Nogays were sunk in sleep. After a slight opposition, all were cut down; the infant in the womb was not spared, and the bald heads stuck on the points of the lances, satisfied the Cossack revenge. After this, Wassily led his riders to the scene of the massacre of his brothers. All that the jaws of the wolves had spared was buried in the steppe. The Cossacks brought back and buried by the Sal river the body of Wassily's father, which he had hidden in the snow. The very women exchanged their mourning for joy when they saw the bloody Nogay heads. Yet the funeral feast was renewed, and the rest of the brandy disappeared.

"This adventure occurred in the first half of the last century. At that period, my grandfather was a very young man, though already renowned as a champion, as a man of herculean

strength, gigantic size and savage bravery. He married three times, and reached an unusual age, even in our country, where strength and health have always been at home. Thirteen sons were the fruit of his first and second marriage. His third wife, a celebrated beauty of Tscherkask, presented him with a daughter, and though she cost him the life of his wife, I really believe that he loved this daughter more tenderly than his thirteen boys together. This favourite child was my mother; twenty years have elapsed since her death, but my grandfather survived her, as well as all his sons. Would that I were a painter, so that I could clearly pourtray to you the appearance of my grandfather, as I see him now before me; words are incapable of doing justice to the subject, for his person was very extraordinary. It was calculated to make a deep and wonderful impression on his grandchildren in their earliest infancy, and we could actually never look at him without a feeling of respect and awe. He measured several inches over six feet, and might have passed for a giant throughout Europe. He wore, moreover, a high cap, with a bunch of ravens'

plumes. Even when the whole military force of the Don was mustered, his colossal form towered more than a hand above the tallest Cossack warriors. But the breadth of his shoulders, the really herculean build of his bones, thews and sinews, from which almost all flesh and fat had disappeared, and the forest of hair that covered his person from scalp to sole, were still more remarkable than his height. When I, as a little boy, remember him, he must have been full seventy years old. His bronzed face was seamed with furrows, an iron-grey and shaggy beard descended to his breast; he had an aquiline nose and a pair of large blood-shot eyes, whose fixed look, together with the large scar in his forehead, gave him a forbidding aspect. He was reputed the best rider in the Don territory, which is saying a good deal. He never rode any steeds except the descendants of the faithful beast, that had saved his life whilst dying in the Nogay steppe, and whose offspring were noted for the same coal-black colour and length of mane as the dam. He was also matchless in wielding the lance and the schaschka, and in the endurance of unheard-

of hardships; nor had he an equal over the brandy bottle."

At this place, the Major halted for a moment in his narrative, and took a long draught from his glass of punch, as if he wished to imply that, at all events, in this noble exercise his ancestors need have no cause to be ashamed of him; after this, he proceeded with his narrative.

"It was not only the imposing—I might almost say devilish appearance of my grandfather, which inspired us, his numerous grandchildren, with such respect and fear in early childhood—feelings that were shared by thousands of our neighbours, even including the Calmucks. His eccentric manners were still more striking than his gigantic stature, or his blood-shot eagle eyes. Before the butchery in the Nogay steppe, Wassily Iguroff was a jovial, and even a handsome fellow. He not only loved his horse, war, schnapps, and pretty girls, but he was a skilful dancer, a capital singer, knew many of our old popular ditties by heart, and is said to have composed some himself. But since that catastrophe his whole nature and countenance underwent a

change ; he became moody and silent, and his songs were hushed. The friends of his youth no longer recognized the merry Wassily, who used to sing, chat and laugh before and after every bold stroke, and who now was seldom roused from his moody silence even in the most boisterous assembly. Some ascribed this change to the dreadful mental shock he experienced at the massacre ; others, with more reason, attributed it to the material shock inflicted on his head. The Nogay scymetar had entered so far into his skull, that it had probably injured his brain, and it required the prodigious strength of my grandfather's constitution to recover at all from such a blow. Whatever the cause, he exhibited strange eccentricities on every occasion, savouring of insanity. I will not repeat all the marvellous legends related of him, half of which were probably inventions. But I know, that though his face was familiar to us boys, his behaviour seemed to us often dreadful. It seems to me as if I still see my giant grandsire, with his grizzly beard, seated by the fire, as was his wont, blowing thick clouds of smoke from his clay pipe, drinking grog, and seeming

quite dumb, save that he occasionally looked up and stared hard with his bloodshot eyes at his grandchildren playing about him. He was kind to us all, and especially so to his favourite daughter. But he never showed his affection by caresses, only when the Armenian cattle traders arrived, he used to buy us a number of pretty toys. He caused a large wooden house to be built by his father's reed cottage. In the corner of the largest room a deep niche was left for the picture of the Mother of God, surrounded by eleven wooden figures of saints, all of them gilt over. The picture was placed in a thick wooden frame, and was partially concealed by a curtain. You will see, later, why I describe this so minutely. A lamp burned continually in this corner, and many decorations of stars, wreaths, chains and rings of gold, silver and pearls glittered around the shrine.

"After every successful foray, Wassily suspended an additional votive offering to his shrine. You know to what lengths the Malo-Russians carry their worship of saints, and it is carried still further among the Cossacks. My grandfather insisted on all his guests of whatever creed,

crossing themselves before the shrine on entering his house, nor would it have been safe for them to have resisted. I shall never forget the terror I felt at his fearful looks when my cousin Michael, a boy of ten years old, who was playing with a sling with me, hit the frame and picture with an unlucky stone. The stroke occasioned a certain rattling sound, which seemed to proceed from the inside of the wood ; but the ferocious expression which suddenly clouded the countenance of my grandfather, called my thoughts away from the frame. The old man seemed to emit flames from his bloodshot eyes, and his teeth gnashed so fearfully that I rushed out of the door in terrible alarm. My cousin had remained motionless, trembling with fear, but the terrible old man seized him by the hair, and threw him out of the house. The lad was soon after drowned in a bog, and wiseacres said it was a judgment, whilst busy tongues ventured to suggest that his grandfather threw him in, though he was incapable of such a base crime.

“ From that hour no one ventured to approach his sanctum. My grandfather stretched a rope across the room, and no mortal was to transgress the limit. He kept the lamp always trimmed

himself. After dinner every one bowed to the niche and left the room, the old man remaining there an hour alone. Not a soul knew what he did at such times. We were often stimulated by curiosity, but not one of us ventured to gratify it. Another of his peculiarities was his great respect for a *mohill** in the steppe. He once caused a cross to be erected on its summit, and forbade access to it henceforth to everybody but himself. The mohill was on his own pasture land, and although it was clothed with high grass, his Tscheredniks were ordered not to drive the cattle there. He visited it often himself, but always on dark stormy days like the present. When a tempest swept through the sky, and the rain beat in heavy streams against the window, he was often seen to saddle his steed, to throw on his burka, and gallop off to the mohill. What he did there was a complete riddle to all. Some Cossacks related that they had occasionally espied old Wassily galloping perpetually round the mound full speed, and singing away as lustily as in his youth, amidst the crashing of the thunder and the .

* The name given by the Malo-Russians to the mounds in the steppe.

whistling of the whirlwind. They added that he indulged in sundry eccentric antics—that he sang or howled an old ancestral song to the accompaniment of the elements, after which he dashed suddenly up the hill, and tied his horse fast to the cross. What more he did there they could not say. As a lad, I had often resolved to follow him on his ride, but I was deterred by respect and awe.

“One of my cousins, Peter Iguroff, also a favourite grandchild of the old man’s, almost lost his life in trying to satisfy his curiosity. One day, when he saw his grandfather prepare for his ride, the boy ran into the steppe and hid himself in the high grass not far from the mohill. The old man came, made his usual circle round the mound, and then mounted the hill. Here he drew forth a kind of axe, and began to dig in the earth. Peter wished to creep nearer, in order to observe him more closely, but my grandfather saw him, and, uttering a withering curse, he flung the axe at him, but it luckily flew over his head. The boy took to his heels as fast as his legs could carry him, and did not dare to show himself to the old man for a whole twelvemonth. From

that day all his family believed that the veteran used to dig for treasure in the mound. This belief spreading, and being coupled with the impression produced by his colossal figure and wizard face, led to the epithet of *Stiepa Tchort* (Steppe Devil), which was applied to him throughout the country. His friends commonly named him ‘Father Vassily.’ Notwithstanding his Satanic surname, he was held in great respect, and his word was law in all disputes.

“ My grandfather, with his sons and his oldest grandchildren, accompanied Munnich’s and Dolgorouki’s expeditions with the Russian armies against the Khans of the Crimea, and took part in Suwarof’s campaign in Poland. Next to the Nogays, he hated no people so much as the Poles—a feeling very common among the Cossacks since their oppression by the Polish nobility.

“ Wassily Iguroff is said to have fought on foot for the first time before Praga. A cannon ball having swept away his horse, he dashed among the Russian infantry, lance in hand, and was one of the first who stormed the Polish batteries. At the siege of Baktchi-Serai, which

put an end for ever to the Tartar forays, my grandfather showed a sanguinary thirst for slaughter, which was generally foreign to his character. He led his squadrons into the burning palace of the Khans, where fanatics were defending themselves desperately from court to court and from room to room. Our Cossacks drove these furious Tartars before their lances, and my grandfather, always at their head, penetrated at length into the harem—into those chambers celebrated in the verses of Pouschkin, where the beautiful Pole, Maria Potocka, met with a violent death. The Cossacks avenged themselves on the gentle and the fair. The wives, children, and slaves of Saheb Gerai begged in vain for mercy.

“ My grandfather smote all without pity, and at the end of the carnage swung his blood-dripping schascka in the air, uttering a shout of jubilee. Perhaps the massacre of his brethren was still fresh in his memory, and he thought it his duty to work out his last revenge in the conquered residence of the Khans.

“ My grandfather did not share in the campaigns of the Russians in Italy and Germany, against the French. His great age excused his

attendance, though his strength remained almost undiminished, and he was still unmatched in the saddle and with the lance. But when Napoleon declared war on Russia, in 1812, and set in motion his immense masses against the heart of our empire, when our beloved Czar Alexander summoned all his people to arms for Viera, (the faith), and Otetchestvo, (country), the energetic veteran declared that he would join the fight with his grandsons. Before our departure he spoke little, but his red eyes seemed to flash fire, and he often muttered between his teeth, whilst stroking his beard, "*tchort*" (devil), and "*Bunapart!*"

"My mother was appointed to guard the house during our absence, and especially charged to watch the shrine, and trim the lamp ; for Wassily always believed if it were quenched, one member of the family would die. The old man started, escorted by thirteen sons and half a hundred grandsons.

"We joined the army of Kutusoff before the battle of Borodino ; it was my third campaign. I had already obtained the rank of lieutenant, but served on this occasion as common Cossack by the side of my grandfather.

As Wassily could neither read nor write Russian, he was entered as a sub-officer; but Platoff gave him the command of a whole squadron, which was nominally commanded by one of my uncles. It would be a long story were I to relate all that happened in the march from Moscow to the Rhine. Amongst all the uncouth and strange figures that followed the call of the Czar from the remotest corners of the empire, scarcely one was a match for Wassily, the Steppe Devil. Yet there was an abundance of picturesque, fabulous, terrible figures in that army. Some of them were fellows who had passed half their life in the saddle—genuine Centaurs of the steppe. The strangest were, perhaps, the Oural Cossacks, who could scarcely be distinguished from Oural bears. Many of these troops were left behind, the Czar being afraid to show them to the West.

“Wassily Iguroff, though ninety years old, displayed the courage and endurance of a young man in the field. He bid defiance to storms, snow and hardships, and his body seemed as callous as leather. Nobody was so frugal or so vigilant. His tremendous bass voice was

always our trumpet-call by the bivouac fire, at dawn. The depth and strength of that voice exceeded the roaring of a bull or a bear, and his boisterous hurrah was always our rallying signal in battle. We required no clarion or trumpet, for his voice was clearer and louder than any wind instrument. He seldom said much, but he was pleased to hear our tales at night after the fatigues of the day, and he was especially pleased if we brought him booty and money. Not a few gold pieces found their way into his pockets. If one of us brought back a large sum, his face brightened, he removed his pipe from his mouth, and said, *choroscho* (good). This alone was a great reward to us, and many of us exposed our lives to obtain this approbation.

"At first all prisoners were cut down, but when the Emperor Alexander offered a piece of gold for every living Frenchman, our grandsire forbade the massacre. His quick eye and ready wit astonished us all in the retreat of the French. The old man was a terribly imposing figure as he swept over the snow, with his nodding plume, and lance in rest. He had always an instinct for booty, and the right time and place for victory. He was never

wounded. A French grenadier, who remained near a deserted cannon and sought for death, fired at him once, at close quarters. For the first time our grandsire was unhorsed; all flew to his help. It was found, however, that the ball had struck against his scabbard, and that the shock alone had unhorsed him. Since the cut of the Nogay scymetar, old Wassily seemed sword and bullet proof: yet, the tirailleur bullets used to whistle merrily about his shoulders! But the French lead avoided a nearer acquaintance with him!

“ When we reached the banks of the Rhine, the veteran felt a longing for the steppes of his fathers; nor was he satisfied by the beauties of the West, for old Wassily was a Cossack of the old stamp, in whose eyes the Don was the loveliest of all streams, and the steppes more attractive than the most fruitful regions. This love of Cossack life and home is no longer so strong in my generation. We were accustomed in our youth to be long absent from home, and many of us were not at all displeased with the luxuries of France and Germany. Many who have been educated in Petersburg go so far as to call the steppe *barbarous*.

" In consideration of his great age, the Steppe Devil was suffered to return home, accompanied by two of his sons. The remainder of the Iguroffs stayed with the army in France. Six of Wassily's sons and fifteen of his grandsons never saw the land of the Don again ; they fell victims to the war, or to the typhus. I brought back two crosses of honour and a stiff leg, and spent five years at St. Petersburgh, where I tried to supply my want of education, in my youth.

" After an absence of eight years I returned home. My mother and many near relations were dead, but my grandfather lived on in a green and hearty old age. He continued to blow his clouds of tobacco, by the chimney-corner, to indulge in frequent oaths, and to maintain a moody silence, as in the days of my childhood. The same mysteries surrounded the niche and the picture as before, and he was said, as formerly, to gallop round the mohill in stormy weather. It had often been a question with us what became of his money, of which he had now amassed a large sum. We naturally inferred that he must have buried it somewhere.

"The time at length arrived when my grandfather received the whole clan of Iguroffs at the baptism of a great grandson. It was a stormy December day. As the Pope was in the act of sprinkling the child, the old man uttered a terrific cry. His red eyes were fixed on the holy niche. The lamp was extinguished. We were all much astonished, especially the Pope, who let the poor infant fall into the basin. Whilst some were fishing up the little one, others ran to my grandsire, who lay extended, with his hand on the scar of his wound, which had become dark, red, and angry. At length he came to himself, shook his head, and began to chant one of his ancestral songs, such as he used to sing in his rounds by the mohill. But his voice became gradually weaker, and it was now evident that he was near his last agony. Our relations all retired, and I, with my elder cousins, remained alone with the dying veteran. We opened all the windows, as usual, to let his spirit pass out. The storm was raging furiously, the house shook and rattled, and the old man had become a stiff corpse, when suddenly the holy picture, frame, veil and all, fell down with an awful crash. The acci-

dent was probably occasioned by the wind, but we were much struck by the coincidence. At length, we raised up the frame, and found, by its weight, that it must contain something. We soon discovered a concealed receptacle, containing a large sum of money, which was divided among his descendants. We also dug, after the funeral, in the mohill, and found a large amount of silver. Now the mysterious ways of the old man were explained. Amongst the shepherds of that part—my relations are all dead—the report is yet rife that the ghost of the Steppe Devil still gallops round the mohill during stormy weather. One of my nephews affirmed, with solemn oaths, that, on one dark November evening, he met my grandfather by that mohill, on a black horse. The old man appeared just the same as during life, only his cap and feathers were much taller, and looked like an eagle's crest; the old man, however, did not sing, as was his wont. I cannot decide if my nephew really saw him, or dreamt it, but no one amongst us doubts the story. As often as the heavens grow dark with stormy clouds on the banks of the Don, and when the lightnings sear the sky, and the Northern storms sweep over

the steppe, the Don Cossacks cross themselves, for they all believe that at such times my ghostly ancestor still rides, as of yore, round the Mogul mounds."

When the Cossack major had concluded his tale, he paused a minute, emptied two glasses of punch, and then proceeded, in an altered tone, to make severe strictures on the present degenerate race of Cossacks.

"Men and manners," he pursued, "are sadly altered amongst us since Yermak conquered Kamtschatka. Hence no more poets appear in our land. Our Hetman resides now on the Neva. The Emperor has graciously allowed us to appoint the hereditary prince,* Hetman of the Don Cossacks. There is more order amongst us now; but every state has its advantages. How wild, fiery and untamed we used to be. We are now more civilized and disciplined, but the old rough times had their interesting features. A man was not then only valued for his rank and ribband. Only fancy, my grandfather never had a Tchin, the plain copper cross of St. George was his only decoration, whilst I," and the Major looked with

* The present emperor.

some complacency at the St. Ann's cross on his breast, "have an order of the second class. Yet the immortal Platoff paid my grandsire greater respect than to any colonel. I am sorry to say that our young people have no longer a proper regard for age, and only value men by their rank. They are also deplorably indifferent to the traditions and fame of their ancestors."

The last sentence was aimed at the Major's son, a specimen of a fast young Cossack, who had just entered, and appeared bored by his father's tale. He was also chary of punch, and paid his addresses to tea and champagne. He was a handsome young officer of a slight figure, well set-off in the Cossack uniform, and industriously engaged in twirling his well-combed mustachio, whilst all his movements bespoke a certain grace. He related sad things of the progress of Novo-Tcherkask on the road to perdition. Large sums of money had been lost at play, and a French confectioner had established a store of genuine champagne Clicquot in that modern Sodom. He told us many things of his recollections of St. Petersburgh, and pronounced the evolutions of Taglioni the most beautiful thing in the world.

Father and son began to chat in Russian, when I wished them good evening, and the staff officer escorted me to Fanagoria. On the road this Muscovite became more communicative, and we talked of the old Cossack's narrative.

"From old Iguroff to his great-grandson you can distinguish," he said, "three epochs in Cossack history, three transitions in the development of these remarkable cavaliers. The grandsire is a representative of the blunt old spirit of the sons of the Steppe, that Peter the Great began to bridle with his iron hand. This was a difficult task at that time; but now every thing is so well observed, that the chastising arm of our Emperor can smite the Cossacks with the speed of lightning. The Major is the type of a transitional generation. He would by no means relish the old equality, and anarchy of the steppes. He has seen and tasted the beauties and delights of Western Europe. Yet he has one foot in the past, and sighs and longs for the freedom of the good old times. His son is quite a creature of modern times, issuing from the cadet school with the vices and advantages of large cities, elegant in his

manners, superficial and empty in mind and heart."

I asked the Muscovite if he thought the Major's story true. He answered :

" I have dwelt at Novo-Tscherkask, and made enquiries, which led me to infer that, in most essentials his statements may be depended upon. Wild beasts, like his grandfather, may have lived on the banks of the Don during the last century. Now, however, they have all died out. They are no longer tolerated by military discipline, and the inhabitants of the steppe have all become much tamer. A giant like Iguroff, if he appeared among the Cossacks of the present day, could no longer play the same part ; he could be thrashed like any other Cossack. The Don Cossacks are now admirably disciplined, and it is only since their new organization by the Emperor, that they have become a really valuable military force. Ten years ago, a few necessary modifications and reforms, such as the abrogation of useless privileges that interfered with discipline occasioned some ill-blood. But now all changes are tolerated without opposition, and the Cossacks soon become inured to them."

During this conversation, we had reached the fortress, and after wishing the Russian good night, I was about to seek my quarters; but the rain having ceased, and the stars gleaming bright over the solitary strand, I was induced to extend my walk and ascend a high mohill. I sat for a long time on its summit, musing on what I had heard. A somewhat monotonous, but beautiful landscape extended beneath me, faintly lighted by the stars. In the foreground was to be seen the shining flood of the Taurian straits, with mysterious mounds lining either shore; the boundless world of steppes, beginning at my feet, stretched in dreary monotony, thousands of miles away, to the icy Bay of Sancta Laurentia. What food for thought has the Western wanderer on the brink of Asia's world of steppes! A mysterious veil conceals alike the past and the future in that region. What has become of all those nations who dwelt here since the fabulous ages, the Taurians and Scythians, located near "the remotest parts of the earth, the Palus Mœotis?" Does the same blood still course in the veins of the Cossacks as that which flowed in the Scyths,

the Sauromatai, the Mœotians, Sinds and Kerketes, the Achaers, Heniochs, Chersonitans, Komans, or other races of whom we know nothing but the name? Or did they all seek refuge before mightier oppressors in the mountains, and form the nucleus of that wonderful compound of races on the Caucasian citadel —the virile band which still bravely defies the claws of the Double Eagle? Will the historian or ethnographer ever pierce that night of the past? The Cossacks and Kabardans laugh at their guests, if they question them about these matters. But what will the future produce? Is it quite as obscure as the past? Can we not infer it from its present position? Or has, perchance, that muscular race, which holds the territory whence the greatest catastrophes have always visited Europe, at length ended its mission; and is civilization henceforth threatened with no more whirlwinds from that quarter? I do not aspire to the gift of prophecy; but I fancy that these skilful Cossacks now answer the purpose of trained elephants to tame the wild ones, and bend them to the service of their lord. Thus, we learn that hundreds of the warlike hordes

of the Siberian steppes have been already taught to obey the word of command that proceeds from the banks of the Neva. All these hordes are now registered as available recruits. Thousands of drill-sergeants from Moscow and the Don are now engaged in teaching them to manœuvre, and some of them have pitched their tents as far as the Chinese border. For more than ten years past, these men have been actively engaged in training squadrons to act in regular military operations. They are said to be highly picturesque corps, well worth a scrutiny by curious European tourists, and resembling "big-bellied Centaurs of the steppe." Nevertheless, let the European tranquillize himself. Possibly all this exercising and training may only be to present a picturesque array of two hundred thousand tamed beasts of the steppe on parade at St. Petersburg !

Ay ! how the Siberian wind swept the sand over that mohill to the westward ! Then it seemed to me as though I saw in the faint starlight, those mighty hordes that Asia is once more to pour over the enervated and effeminate nations of Western Europe ! Me-

thought I heard the savage cries of the disciplined Moguls, with their barbarian spirit, shouting their terrible "Halla!" like the sons of Genghis and Batu, when they marched forth at the head of their millions of steppe devils to lay waste the world! And the Mogul mounds opened themselves, and the ancestral spirits shouted with joy to their sons and grandchildren, from the funereal barrows of the steppe!

I turned away from this vision on the mohill, and wrapped in my burka, hurried home to my warm and cheerful quarters in the house of the apothecary. On my way thither, the storm-wind was no longer whistling the Cossack melody of "Halla!" and "Hurrah!" it seemed only to blow a warning in my ears, which took the form of the words of a Sclavonic writer, which I beg the reader to read over twice :

"We Sclavonians owe our Western brethren, a warning of the utmost moment. The man of the West is too forgetful of the north of Europe and of Asia, the home of plundering and exterminating nations. Let no man believe that these nations have ceased to exist. They still continue there, like a cloud big with tem-

pests, only awaiting the signal from above, to dart down from the table-lands of central Asia upon Europe. Let no one suppose that the spirit of Attila, Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, Suwarof, the terrible scourges of humanity, is extinct * * * Those lands, those men, and that spirit are still there to keep civilization alive, and to warn it of the fact, that it is not yet time for the West to turn its swords into ploughshares, or its barracks into charitable institutions.”

CHAPTER III.

Departure from Fanagoria—Scene at Taman—The river Kouban—The appearance of the Tschernomorski Cossacks compared with that of the Circassian—First sight of the Caucasus—Arrival at Ekaterinodar—Picture of that City—Danger of travelling along the Kouban—The Cathedral of Ekaterinodar—Its Garrison—Cause of the submission of the Circassian Tribes on the left bank.

My frail quarters at Fanagoria seemed about to be shaken down every moment by the violence of the wind on the night of March 9th. This was, however, positively the last appearance of the Boreas of the steppes. The wind fell after midnight, and a bright frosty morning showed that the weather was changed, and that the Black Sea would soon be calm. The smiling face of my host, on his appearance,

intimated that he was the bearer of good news. A vessel had arrived at Kertch with a carriage of such an outlandish shape, that it must be mine. Two minutes later, I was cheered with the sight of Stephen Nogell, my Hungarian servant, a faithful, friendly Magyar, who accompanied me in all my peregrinations in Southern Russia. With him came M. V—f, a native of the Netherlands, serving as a volunteer in the army of the Caucasus, and who begged for a place in my carriage, which I gladly gave him. M. V— had passed many years in the Caucasus, knew the country and the people in the mountains and the steppes well ; and being familiar with the Russian and Tartar tongues, was a very useful as well as amusing companion.

I parted from my friendly host, whose eyes were the only moist ones that I left behind me in the land of the Cossacks ; but when I arrived at Taman, I was detained by a most unpleasant piece of business. The postmaster and his people would only furnish me with horses, and not with rope harness. The Russian sub-officer, who accompanied me, maintained that it was all a pretence, that the Tscherno-

morski Cossacks were the most impudent rascals in the world, and must be resisted. He proceeded to administer a volley of oaths, accompanied with heavy blows on the table, to bring the postmaster to reason, charging him with want of respect to a foreigner under imperial protection. The postmaster appeared terrified, but had probably no ropes to produce. I would have willingly yielded, but the sub-officer insisted.

Unluckily my friends, the Don major and the staff officer, had left Taman. . I, therefore, sent the sub-officer with the circular note of the Minister Perowski to the Commandant. In the Crimea this document had always ensured respect and obedience. But here I soon discovered that the good folks were only used to the influence of epaulettes and decorations. The Commandant treated my papers with indifference, observing that I had no Tchin, and maintained that the postmaster was right. After a good deal more parleying, the Commandant declared the affair to be a mere trifle, and said he would defray the cost of the ropes. This remark silenced me, and I sent my servant to buy the ropes at the bazaar.

I only mention this scene to show that my eyes were opened to some new truths in the land of the Cossacks. You do not find there the slavish humility, grovelling respect, trembling awe, which soldiers, serfs, lower employés, and all of lower degree show to their superiors in Muscovy, and display especially to those who are connected with the central government of St. Petersburg, and to all excellencies and highnesses. The staff officer said that the Cossacks were broken in to discipline and subordination. This is true in general. Their free, manly spirit is broken and gone ; but there is a wide interval between Cossack discipline and the servile obedience of the genuine Russians.

Every observant traveller on the banks of the Don and the Kouban must perceive that he is among a people who have never known serfdom or conscription, that even the common men have not quite forgotten that their sires were free, and that they defended their home in the steppe as gallantly against the Kings of Poland and the Czars as against the Osmanli Padischah and the Khan of the Golden Horde. Nor have they yet forgotten their special privileges, of which they have only been deprived

about a dozen years. A Russian *employé* once had a dispute about the price of a horse, with a Cossack, at a post-station in the Caucasus. The Cossack stuck firmly, but courteously, to his demand.

"What do you mean, soldier?" exclaimed the functionary, offended at the independent attitude of the Cossack.

"*Ja nä soldat, ja Kasak,*" (I am not a soldier, I am a Cossack), rejoined the cavalier, very quietly.

Despotism does not weigh with such a heavy hand on the Don and the Oural as on the banks of the Neva, the Moskwa, and the Vistula. The cause of this is very apparent. It is because these southern horsemen have still a way of escape left open to them, whilst it has been cut off from the other vassals of Russia. The Tschernomorski can, if needs be, enter his boat, trust himself to the currents of the Black Sea, and escape to Anatolia. The occupants of the Stanitzas,* on the Terek and the Kouban, if oppressed, can fly over the river to the Nogays and Kabardans, and if reduced to extremity, seek refuge among the

* Fortified Cossack villages.

mountains of their mortal enemies, the Circassians. They would never be delivered up, by any chance, and though their lot be hard, yet it is preferable to the fearful situation of a grey-coated conscript, condemned for life to carry the musket, and submit to the blows of the Russian provost !

“ What a frightful country ! ” remarked my Magyar, after we had passed three post-stations, and the scenery became more bald and monotonous. The dark-blue foaming waves of the Sea of Azoff had disappeared, and nothing remained but the muddy water of the Temrjukian Liman. An endless plain extended to the eastward. The mohills, and other landmarks, were becoming rarer, and at length, the only elevations were the little molehills raised by the steppe marmot. The mountain chain of the Caucasus was not visible from this spot. Only a few men and herds are to be met with in the Tschernomorski plains ; I encountered no travellers whatever. The western, or lower part of the Kouban is seldom visited even by Russian travellers. All who are not called by business to Ekaterinodar, prefer the more convenient route by Novo-

Tscherkask and Stavropol to the Caucasus. Almost all the Armenian traders from Odessa follow this road, or cross in the steam-boat from Kertch to Redout-Kaleh. The road by Stavropol is also the nearest for military men proceeding from St. Petersburg to Tiflis. Those who wish to avoid the difficult winter journey through the mountain passes, embark on board the steamers at Kertch, which give them a free passage to Mingrelia.

We passed the first night in the post-house of Temjuk, and the second in the Stanitza of Kopilskaja. On the third day we dashed along at a flying gallop to Ekaterinodar. No one travels by night in these regions, on account of the bands of Circassians that hang about the road, concealed in the reedy thickets by the river's bank. It is only at the hour of 9 A.M., after the Cossacks have well examined the thickets adjoining the different kreposts, and when no alarm has been given from the look-outs, that the four well-fed Tschernomorski horses are harnessed and the Cossack driver sweeps away over the steppe, as if death were at his heels. Everybody strives to reach before night some post-station, where he finds

free quarters, with a deal sofa, table and chairs ; but no bed, and only one room. Yet there is seldom much competition on the Kouban, from the want of comfort and security on the road. If, however, the room should chance to be occupied, the Russians of high rank—and you seldom meet any other travellers here.—are courteous, sociable and amiable. Room is soon found for the stranger, and the samovar provides a refreshing supply of the Chinese herb, so popular with all classes of the community in Muscovy. The superior Russian officers take with them, moreover, a whole larder and *batterie de cuisine*, caviare, meat-patties, pheasants and punch, and the foreigner is politely invited to share these good things. But if the traveller happen to meet no one, and visits the country at fast time, he fares badly. When I was there, the fast or the lowness of the river had put a check to shooting, and no one offered me any game, which is generally plentiful. I was, consequently, reduced to a rice diet.

The Black Sea Cossacks ought, more correctly, to be styled the Kouban Cossacks ; for their abode is principally by that river,

few of them living near the Euxine, on account of its marshy shore in this neighbourhood. The Tschernomorski have room enough in all conscience, as there are only about twenty families to twenty square miles. This is one of the dreariest regions I ever beheld. Not a hill, rock, or wood to break the monotony of the prospect. It is true, the traveller has no cause to fear panthers or rattlesnakes ; but if the inhabitants are of my opinion, these descendants of the Saporogi must be far from grateful to Catherine for having been presented with this territory. Tschernomorzia is a fruitful and marshy level, desperately monotonous. The streams descending from the Caucasus pursue a sluggish course when they reach the steppe. Their turbid currents leave behind them, ere they reach the plains, those mighty trachyte and porphyritic boulders, which they roll along in their angry tide as they thunder down the mountain heights in picturesque cataracts. In the steppe, they soon change their character ; their fall is slight, their bed broad and deep, and they leave a heavy deposit of mud on their banks, which are fringed with trees and brushwood, offering the only

vegetation to relieve the eye. From the right bank of the Kouban to the Don is one immense level, without wood or rock—in summer a luxuriant pasturage, in winter one field of snow. The previous winter having been mild, I found the land of the Cossacks enamelled with flowers in the month of March.

The Tschernomorski Cossacks are handsome men in the full sense of the term. Not only are they distinguished for their athletic and powerful figures, but their features are well chiselled and expressive. They are the handsomest Sclavonic tribe that I have ever seen. Even when beardless, their faces are handsomer than those of the Cossacks of the Line, who have no decided type about them, and whose finest men remind you sometimes of Circassians, at others of Turks and Tartars. Military regulations having condemned both imperial and beard, the Tschernomorskis cultivate their mustachios with especial tenderness. They draw them out so, that they often stretch beyond their cheeks, and they comb and wax them with great care. Few people can boast of handsomer mustachios; even the Hungarians must yield them the palm in this respect.

In other points, these two races have so much resemblance between them, that my young Magyar was quite struck with it. But they have no affinity to their Circassian neighbours across the Kouban.

The Schapooks, who dwell on its left bank, are spare and finely formed, and a mighty energy speaks out of their thin eagles' faces, which are characteristic of the Circassian type. The frame of the Tschernomorskis is, on the other hand, more robust and athletic than elegant, and an expression of repose and phlegm reigns in their handsome and regular countenances, which presents the most marked contrast to the warlike fire flashing from the eyes of the Circassian Usdens (chiefs). The winter dress of the Cossacks is not becoming ; they wrap themselves in sheepskin coats, which give them a somewhat grotesque appearance. Even when under arms, and escorting a convoy, they retain their unwieldy attire, which is only exchanged for the blue uniform when the inspecting general makes his appearance on the Kouban.

Ninety versts* from Taman, between Temr-

* A Russian verst = 0·143376 of a German geographical mile, 0·23960 of a French mile, of 25 to a degree, two-thirds

ruk and Kopilskaja, the chain of the Caucasus is seen for the first time on the southern horizon of the Kouban Steppe. The first appearance of these mountains is not so imposing as might be imagined, owing to their great distance, and because their giant summits, the Elbruz, Kasbek, and Passenta, are not yet visible. Nor can you distinguish from hence the peculiar features of the Caucasus, furrowed with wild ravines, and broken by pointed summits and jagged outlines. Even farther east, between Kopilskaja and Ekaterinodar, the distant chain veiled in mist did not assume a picturesque form. The mountains appeared almost of an uniform height, and only a single peak, which bore some resemblance to the Tschatir Dagh, in the Crimea, rose to a considerable elevation above the others. The farther we advanced into the land of the Cossacks, the more did the Caucasus appear to run away from us. Its snowy summits entirely disappeared from view on the other

of a British statute mile, or 1166 yards 2 feet; 104 versts make 60 English geographical miles. See Preface to "Wrangel's Narrative of an Expedition to the Polar Sea." Edited by Major Edward Sabine.

side of Ustlabinskaya. A misty atmosphere concealed this southern background till our arrival at Ekaterinograd, on the Terek, where we at length obtained, on a fine day, a full view of the colossal Caucasian chain, which, I must confess, produced an indescribably sublime impression upon me.

We reached Ekaterinodar, the capital of the Tschernomorski Cossacks, in good time on the 12th of March. The Yamschick (driver) of the last station, dreading the Circassians in the thickets to the right, urged his horses to a terrific pace, and our carriage flew along with the speed of lightning. I was engaged in thanking my stars that the steppe did not bring forth stones, when we suddenly encountered another hostile element. The carriage stuck fast in the mud. No cursing or thrashing could make the horses drag it out; and though it was sorely against the will of my Cossack that we alighted, we were forced to leave it behind us. Albeit our stalwart mustachioed driver swore that he had often got out of a worse mess, and swang his whip *con furore*, we soon found that it was a hopeless business — *lasciate ogni speranza*—and we made our way to the town

on foot, leaving our luggage to be brought after us on men's backs.

On an impartial estimate of the Cossack capital, and after comparing it with many hundred cities whither my peregrinations have led me, I readily admit, that none can dispute with it the palm of being the first mudhole in the world.

"But comfort yourself, my dear fellow," said my Dutch companion, "you soon get accustomed to it in the steppe. Besides, this is not much. This is only the appearance of Ekaterinodar in fine dry weather. You should come here during a wet winter to know this city of sloughs, and to see the formidable barrier which its filth presents to the Circassians. It is very lucky that nothing but the carriage stuck fast. Many riders, with their horses, have been embogged for days together." Thus comforted, I entered the Cossack town.

I have often seen designs of Cossack towns in Russia, but they give you no just idea of them. You must visit them yourself to know what they are like. Steppe towns and steppe life have nothing analagous in the West. A man, looking down on the Tschernomorski

capital from a balloon, would form no unfavourable idea of it. Almost all the houses are small, are built of mud and earth, some few of wood, and all are thatched with straw, save the residence of the Hetman. But the streets are straight, broad and airy, and the houses look like rows of soldiers. It contains many gardens and orchards, carefully tended, and refreshing to the eye after the bare steppes. But, let the traveller draw near, and he will be disenchanted. The Polish element, dirt, prevails everywhere. Black swine are seen on all sides, wallowing in the filth, and a ceaseless grunting jubilee greets the ear from morn till dewy eve. The inhabitants are noted for the breeding of swine, and for their excellent bacon.

No walls, ramparts, or ditch surround the place, which, as my Dutch friend remarked, is more effectually defended by its filth. The town contains a krepost in its centre, to which the inhabitants can retire in extremity, though it is a weak post. It certainly gives no high idea of Circassian valour that they have never made an attempt to storm Ekaterinodar, whose fort is only protected by a low wall and ditch, which could be cleared by a good horseman.

But the fact is, that the tribes of the Caucasus, like all mountaineers, are only terrible on their own ground. Genuine highlanders have never been conquerors of the world. The hordes of Attila, Genghis Khan, and Tamerlane, were inhabitants of the steppe and table-lands, and the Saracen and Persian hosts of Omar and Nadir issued from the wilderness. The great losses experienced by the Russians in the Caucasus were always owing to their attempts to penetrate into the woods, defiles, and mountains.

General —ki, a man of no very brilliant talents, commanded at Ekaterinodar during the absence of Lieutenant-General Sawadofski, who was at that time Hetman of the Don Cossacks. This worthy informed me that I had been very imprudent in travelling without an escort, adding that three thousand Circassians had lately swam across the Kouban, between Temrjuk and Ekaterinodar; that he had issued orders to have all the thickets searched before day-break along the road; but that the wily mountaineers often escape detection, and even with an escort, the traveller is far from safe.

These sentiments, emanating from one inte-

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rested in giving a favourable view of the country, made some impression on me, and I resolved to stay a few days at Ekaterinodar, in order to make farther inquiries as to the best mode of proceeding. The March wind blew so cold, that I felt no inclination to be dragged off naked to the mountains, and to freeze there as a Circassian slave. M. V—f was discussing pheasants and other delicacies with some Cossack friends. I went to visit the little fort, and quaint Cossack Cathedral. This building is formed of six high and grotesque wooden pillars. Two monstrous bells were ringing for evening worship ; a strange, uncouth peal, such as I never heard elsewhere. I never saw less taste or more gaudy finery about any religious edifice than this. The altars were groaning with gold and silver ornaments, flags, and pictures of saints ; but the wooden walls of the church are very filthy. The limbs of the saints are of solid silver ; but their faces are ridiculous distortions. The Black Sea Cossacks seemed even less conyersant with the fine arts than the Arabs of Constantine.

My friend, the English traveller, Longworth, asked me, on my return to Constantinople,

about the treasures in the Cathedral at Ekaterinodar. Many Europeans who have read the travels of Klaproth, fancy that this region is richer in gold and precious stones than any province in Russia. This is an error. Few of the Black Sea Cossacks accompanied the Russian armies in their lucrative campaigns. Most of the booty in Poland, Italy, &c., and the German ducats worn by Cossack girls as necklaces, were carried off by the Don, and other tribes farther north. The Kouban and Terek Cossacks, as protectors of the empire to the south, will never be removed far from the frontier. Their engagements have been chiefly with the Circassians, and the finery in the Cathedral at Ekaterinodar testifies rather to their devotion than their wealth.

The population of Ekaterinodar amounts to five thousand souls, including the garrison. The latter is composed of eight hundred, mostly married, but able-bodied Cossacks, and one hundred and fifty foot soldiers. If a signal from the outposts announce a Circassian incursion, the whole mounted garrison turns out into the steppe, and often goes some versts away. The small body of infantry is

the only garrison that remains, and, as we have said before, it gives no high idea of Circassian prowess, that the place has not been taken ere now. Mr. Longworth, who resided among the Shapsooks, and knew this people well, is justly of opinion that we ought not to measure their warlike qualities by a European standard. Always accustomed to bush fighting, to incursions and stratagems, the Circassians are not adapted to large and deliberately planned expeditions. Rebellious to discipline, they are incapable of profiting by the advantages resulting from personal bravery, by order and a systematic co-operation of infantry and cavalry, by the tactical evolutions of European troops, and the concentration of masses on a given point. I have often discussed this matter at Pera with Mr. Longworth, over our tchibouks, and we both came to the conclusion, that no great result could be expected from an offensive war against the Russians, at least in the Western Caucasus, and that it was, on the whole, the best policy of the Circassians to reserve all their strength for a defensive war. On their own ground, they will long form a terrible force, and many years will elapse ere the Muscovs

wrest from them any decided advantage. After the experience of the Russians, for half a century in the Caucasus, it may be safely affirmed that two centuries must elapse before the mountaineers are completely curbed, and under the yoke of the ukase. Nor will the most attentive observer of contemporaneous history be disposed to admit as a certainty, that the Russian Cabinet will have the ability, or the inclination, to persevere in its momentous undertaking for so long a period.

CHAPTER IV.

The Circassians in Ekaterinodar and in Turkey—Beauty of the genuine Adighè people—Chora-Beg—Peaceable intercourse between the Cossacks and Circassians—Relations of the Neutral Tribes—An Evening among the Cossacks—Adventures of a German Physician in the Caucasus—Arti-Mollah, the grateful Circassian, an Episode of the War in the Caucasus.

THE Friday market at Ekaterinodar swarmed with Circassians. They were handsome men, with coal-black beards, aquiline noses, and flashing black eyes. This was the first occasion on which I saw a large body of them together. I had often met single Circassian wanderers elsewhere, in Asiatic Turkey, in Southern Russia, on the Black Sea, and on the Sea of Marmora. You often meet with natives of the Caucasus at Constantinople, dressed in the well-known Cir-

cassian costume; but they are members of some of the various tribes that people the Caucasian isthmus, and their figures and faces differ as much as their character and occupation. The Tschigeths and Abchasians, who are not noted for their heroic valour, carry on the slave, or some other trade with Turkey; the ardently religious Lesghian and Tschetschensian has, probably, the pilgrimage to Mecca in view; the object of the Usden is, perhaps, the love of adventure, sympathy with the Turks, and visits to eminent relations. It is very possible, however, to meet with twenty individuals in the bazaar in Constantinople, wearing the Circassian costume, without possessing the Circassian type. This frequently occasions erroneous statements regarding the celebrated beauty of these mountaineers, whom many tourists at Constantinople pronounce to be unworthy of their fame. Even the Caucasian squadrons of the guard at St. Petersburg consist of the greatest possible mixture of the tribes. The genuine Adighè must be seen on the Kouban; it is here that you find the most splendid representatives of that tribe.

The Psadooks, to the south of Ekaterinodar,

and, still more, the Shapooks, whose abode is situated a few miles beyond the Kouban, and extends as far as the most northern declivity of the highest chain, belong to the handsomest of the tribes, and are supposed, together with the Kabardans, to speak the purest dialect of the Adighè language. I grant that those who expect to find ideals of manly beauty throughout these tribes, will be often greatly disappointed. For even among the Circassians, the great body of the people consists of additions from other races, of vassals and slaves of noblemen, whose origin cannot be easily ascertained, but who are probably the descendants of prisoners, or of subjugated tribes. The Circassian nobles, *works*, i. e. knights, form at most one-fifth, and some well-informed Russians say only one-tenth, of the Adighè people. These men alone have hereditary possessions, slaves, and votes in the deliberative assemblies; and it is only these *works*, and the still more distinguished members of the princely families (*pschis*), who are entitled to the high praise lavished on Circassian beauty. This aristocratic caste despises all connection with a plebeian, even if he is free, and has

become rich by trade. The Circassian nobleman only courts the daughter of his peer, and preserves thereby the purity of the race, the nobility of blood and person, the beauty of physiognomy, the chivalrous pride of bearing, and a peculiar elegance of movement, manners, and mode of speech.

The Circassian knight is characterized by a personal superiority, which has its origin alike in his mental energy, and in the consciousness of his bodily strength and beauty. This superiority of the pure Circassian betrays itself equally under the Muscovite discipline, and in the Mussulman East, where the sons of the Caucasus at Cairo, as Mamelukes, and at Stamboul, as Pachas, always played a distinguished part. Even the Turk, who imposes on all other Orientals by certain magnanimous qualities, admits the superiority of the Circassian Usdens. The Emperor Nicholas, who maintained an iron discipline amongst all the various kinds of troops in his immense empire, displayed a striking consideration towards the Circassian squadrons of his guard. Persons who are intimately acquainted with the arrangements at St. Petersburg, relate many characteristic anec-

dotes that show how the bold, independent spirit of these Caucasian mountaineers remains unbroken by the Russian rod, and how this spirit so imposes on the Emperor, and even on the severest of barrack-masters, the Grand Duke Michael, that both have often tolerated open mutiny.

At a review, when the Circassian cavalry once plainly refused to obey orders, the Emperor was satisfied with giving them a formal rebuke through Count Benkendorf. By the side of the coarse heavy Russian soldier, the Circassian looks like an eagle amongst a flock of bastards. An Englishman, who resided a long time at St. Petersburg, relates that whenever the multitude draws back in terror, in a crowd, you may be sure that an officer of the guards, a policeman or a Circassian is coming. They do not venture even to punish very severely capital crimes committed by these people. A Circassian, who once plunged his kinschal* into the heart of a droschky driver at St. Petersburg, because of an exorbitant fare, was only punished by being sent back to the Cau-

* Dagger.

casus. The knout, and exile for life, to the Siberian mines would have been the fate of all Slavonic subjects of the Czar committing the same offence.

Amongst the Circassians at Ekaterinodar, one *work*, belonging to the Shapsook tribe, was especially remarkable for his beauty and imposing bearing. All the most picturesque forms of Arabs and Moors that I saw in Algeria must strike their colours before this eagle of the Caucasus. I certainly found, subsequently, in Mingrelia, more ideal countenances, approaching nearer to the antique Apollo type; but their expression was too soft and effeminate, and the hero's head on the Kouban pleased me better. I stood some time rooted to the ground before the Shapsook, so powerful was the impression he made upon me. "What a study?" thus I mused, "for a German painter, who in vain seeks for such models in Rome, or for a Vernet, who finds in groups of Arabs the highest aim for his brush!" The forms of the Arabs, which are rather priestly than warlike, represented by Vernet at Versailles, would not create such an effect as a picture of a Circassian by a Peter Hess! The Shapsook chief appeared,

however, quite conscious of his splendid appearance. With a proud bearing, and the light, half-floating step, peculiar to these mountaineers, he stalked through the groups of Cossacks into the market, casting looks of the profoundest contempt on their unwieldy forms thickly wrapped in sheepskins. His uncommonly spare figure, his beautiful foot, the spirit and chivalrous character of all his movements, the richness of his dress and the splendour of his arms contrasted very favourably with the muscular, but somewhat uncouth make, and the ugly woolly winter clothing of the Tschernomorskis. Nor was the contrast less striking between the noble profile of his face, and his magnificent eyes, and the beautiful, well fed, but entirely vacant and unmeaning countenances of his opponents on the right bank of the Kouban.

By the assistance of a Cossack, who knew the Adighè language, I succeeded in making the acquaintance of the Caucasian knight, and in entering into conversation with him. He was named Chora-Beg, and inhabited an aoul, thirty versts (twenty miles) south of Ekaterinodar. He was astonished to find that I was neither a "Moscof" nor an "Inglis." He had only some

obscure knowledge that, besides these two nations, there was another Christian people which had become very powerful under Sultan Bunapart, and had waged war with the Padi-scha of the Russians. On the other hand, he had never heard of the existence, or even name of a Nemze* nation. He readily allowed me to examine his beautiful arms, and I showed him my double-barrelled fowling-piece. He had never seen a fluted-rifle barrel, and he seemed rather sceptical as to my assertion that it carried much farther than a common gun. Besides, a kinschal and pistols, he wore a long, ponderous, slightly curved cavalry sabre (schaschka), with an ivory and silver hilt, which, at my request, he drew from its scabbard, and brandished twice in the air. How well he looked, the chivalrous mountaineer! How his eagle eyes flashed!

On my asking him, how many Russians he had killed with his schaschka, a peculiar expression passed over his features. I could not exactly decipher the Circassian's inmost thought, but I fancied I could detect hatred and a

* *Nemze*, or *Niemce*, is the name given by Russians to Germans, and signifies the Dumb.—*Translator.*

curl of contempt in his striking physionomy. He said that it was a long time since his tribe had been at war with Russia. Since the "deaf General" (Sass) had left the land of the Cossacks, there had been a truce between the Russians and the Shapooks. Only individuals among them were still disposed to join the bands of Adighès, which come from a greater distance in the mountains to cross the Kouban. Doubtless, Chora-Beg only told me half the truth, and the proud look of his eye whilst he spoke, belied his words. The Circassians surrounding him were inferior to him in corporeal beauty, and in nobleness of manners. Some of these were his vassals and retainers, who are called Tschofokots, and who are a degree higher than the actual slaves (*Pschilts*). Among the remaining Circassians who were present, were several men of the Psadoock tribe, who entertained less hostile feelings against the Russians, and have lately made proposals of submission to Prince Woronzof. It was easy, at first sight, to distinguish the knights from the vassals and retainers in these groups, from the noble character of their features, and, indeed, of their whole person, even when they

were not conspicuous by their attire. The Usden only appears in his silver embroidered dress on extraordinary occasions, and I have never seen, on the Kouban or Terek, or in the interior of the Caucasus, coats of mail such as those worn by the Circassian squadrons at St. Petersburg.

This unrestrained appearance of Circassians on Russian ground is a very significant fact, bearing on the present state of the Kouban district. It is a strange thing to see these men, who had invaded the country a few days before, perhaps, plundering and killing, now moving about peaceably among groups of Cossacks. The Russian system consists in offering a friendly reception to the neighbouring tribes on the other side of the Kouban, in not forbidding access to their towns and stanitzas to their known enemies, and in giving a free passage to all Circassians who do not crowd together in too large bodies.

The advantages and evils of this plan are nearly equally balanced. It is evident that the introduction of commercial habits is the most certain method that the Russians could employ to enervate the virile character of the

Adighès. A system like this, which identifies the material prosperity of the Circassians with a peaceful intercourse with the Russians, must effect their object more surely and speedily than powder and shot, which have led to such severe losses, and obtained such slight results. Woronzof, by his recent regulations to facilitate barter with the Circassians, though to the loss of the treasury, has shown that he has a much deeper insight into the Caucasian question than his predecessors. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that this humane system has serious disadvantages, and is opposed by several of the most able and experienced officers in the army of the Caucasus. Numerous spies steal across the border among the Circassians, and move about without hindrance. Nothing escapes their practised eyes, and they bring back accurate details of all the stanitzas and kreposts, the weakest points of attack, &c. It will be difficult for the Russians to concentrate large bodies of men for an expedition without its being discovered immediately. The wily plan of General Sass used to be, to deceive the Circassians who frequented the markets, but his stratagems did not always avail him.

On the left bank of the Kouban, opposite the Cossack capital, dwell the neutral or so-called friendly tribes, nominally subject to Russia. Their territory extends from ten to thirty versts (twenty miles) southward towards the mountains. They are not very numerous, and their character and mode of life resemble more those of the Kabardans, than the highland Circassians. These poor people who till the ground as well as breed cattle, are in a deplorable situation. Hemmed in between the Russians and their opponents, they do their utmost to remain neutral, pledge their friendship to both parties, fight one day for the Russians, and the next for their compatriots, and answer the purpose of scouts and spies to both. Even a portion of the Psadooks and Schapsooks belong to these neutral tribes, besides the greater part of the inhabitants on both banks of the Laba. They live too near the mouths of the Russian cannon to be able to bid them defiance with impunity, like their brethren in the south, who have a safe asylum close at hand in their forests and ravines. They take part in most of the mountain assemblies of the Usdens, by means of deputies, whenever important questions are in agitation, and

they always incline to the side of peace. A great many Usdens of the Schapsook tribe belong to this peace party.

In the above-mentioned assemblies, the party that advocates quiet, and remonstrates against any warlike project, is generally the most numerous ; but it is frequently overruled by the greater energy of the warlike minority, and yields to avoid drawing on itself the revenge of the more combative mountaineers. The Russian generals always obtain correct information of what transpires in these assemblies, by means of well paid spies. It is not an uncommon case, however, for the tribes "friendly" to Russia, to join the incursions of the hostile mountaineers, either from lust for booty, or from fear of being chastized by their compatriots for their neutrality. If on the other hand, the Cossacks form an expedition to attack and burn down the abodes of their opponents, their Circassian allies are compelled to join them, receiving high pay for their services ; but they do not push their countrymen very close, though they consume a great deal of powder, to satisfy the Russian generals, and fire over the heads of the hostile mountaineers. In all these expeditions, a secret

understanding exists between the Circassians of the steppe, and of the mountains, to do each other as little harm as possible. The Russian generals conduct themselves on the whole in a very forbearing manner towards the neutral tribes, because they prefer to retain them as luke-warm friends, rather than to drive them to become declared enemies.

At the same time, it should be remembered that these ambiguous allies afford the Russians the only intelligence they obtain of the hostile plans hatched in the mountains. They are also serviceable in procuring an exchange of prisoners.

During my walk, Mr. V—f, had dined with his friends and comrades, and tossed off many a glass of brandy down his well-seasoned throat to the honour of the Emperor and to his own. When I met him again, he showed a bold face, and laughed at all the dangers that we might encounter on the road to Stavropol. "Courage," he said, "we have eight Cossacks for an escort, and four loaded barrels in the carriage. If our troopers were to turn tail, we could at all events shoot down four of the scamps, and then resort to our swords and daggers. But nothing of the kind will happen. The whole line is in a state

of alarm, and troops are marching up from Stavropol. Be sure this is another false report, and that the danger is magnified by fear.

I was only half convinced by these assurances, but I willingly accepted my companion's offer to introduce me to his Cossack friends. We crawled into the little house of a Tchernomorski captain, where a drinking bout was taking place. A dozen *mustaches* were seated huddled together, playing at cards and drinking from vast bowls of *vodka* (brandy) before them. They were sitting over their dessert, and none of them were sober. The host shook hands with me so cordially, that I was ready to cry out with pain ; and immediately after I had to incur the pressure of a dozen equally muscular gripes. None of the guests were above the captain in rank, and they spoke nothing but Russian. This was a good opportunity for me to turn to account my slight fund of this language, but the Tchernomorskis spoke such an uncouth dialect, or else my ears were so unpractised that I could scarcely follow them. The Cossacks did not approve of my resorting to an interpreter, as they like to talk face to face.

I had no cause to complain of want of courtesy,

either here or anywhere else in Russia. Hospitality is common to all the Sclavonic tribes, and as far as my experience goes, it is more refreshing to the wanderer than that of the Tartars, Turks, and Arabs, which has been much exaggerated.

On my entering, a wild tumult prevailed in the room, and the vodka drinkers seemed about to sink into a state of bestiality. The presence of a stranger made them sober. Even the Cossacks make great efforts to conceal their state from foreigners. Boiled and roast meat was handed to me, and the host went round the circle enjoining his guests to observe decorum in my presence. Travellers from the west are so rare on the Kouban, that they create quite a sensation among these rude Cossacks, who have sufficient vanity to wish a good impression to be made on their visitors. Hence my entrance put a stop to the cards, to the shouting and cursing, and even the vodka glasses were only sipped after a long pause. This scene reminded me of an episode in the campaign of Charles XII against Peter the Great, related by Norberg. The Cossacks of the Ukraine, then allies of the Swedes, reeled up to the royal table after copious potations. The signs of intoxication had ever filled the

Swedish king with horror, and in consideration of this feeling, the Cossack commander promised General Rhenschild, that they would remain sober till ten o'clock in the morning. I know not how long the self-denial of my Tchernomorski's would have lasted, but I soon freed them from their restraint, by retiring into a side room with a German physician and a dragoman, the two most cultivated inhabitants of Ekaterinodar. I passed a pleasant evening with these companions, chatting over our tea, whilst the Cossacks played and drank in the adjacent apartment.

The German physician, a man advanced in years, had passed an adventurous life, and his wanderings had ultimately led him, after many vicissitudes, amongst the Tchernomorski Cossacks. There are, unfortunately, but too many specimens of these German adventurers in the East, men whose lives exceed the most fantastic romance. Most of them do little honour to the German name, but the doctor at Ekaterinodar was superior to the majority in mind and culture. He had run away from school in Germany, on account of some daring frolic, had gone to Russia, where his knowledge of

medicine obtained him a post in the navy, had married, and become a Russian subject. Having offended and challenged a superior officer, he had been degraded to the ranks ; he was said, also, to have been punished for a deficit in the balance of the hospital accounts. His faithful wife, accompanied him to the Caucasus, where, after some years, he obtained the fourteenth rank in the Tchin again. For the second time degraded on account of a duel, he was forced to carry a musket for nine years. At length, he became an officer once more, accompanied many expeditions as military surgeon, and was now stationed for a time on the Kouban, though he expected daily to be ordered on a route. His faithful wife had died whilst he was a private, and he bestowed many sighs upon her memory. Though far from envying the poor man his black bread diet of ten year's duration, I should have been glad of enjoying his opportunities of obtaining an insight into the Caucasus.

As the doctor saw that I was especially interested about this matter, he ransacked his memory to retail a series of adventures that he had experienced during his residence in the

Caucasus. The dragoman contradicted him sometimes, and on many points he differed widely from the doctor. Yet both had enjoyed excellent opportunities for years, of judging correctly men and manners in this part of the world, and both spoke fluently the Tartar language, which is the universal vehicle of intercourse throughout the Caucasian range.

The dragoman had accompanied General —— in all his inspections, and had often resided for months together among the neutral tribes on the left bank of the Kouban. Neither the doctor nor the interpreter had a very favourable idea of the Circassians, but their judgment of individual men and cases was diametrically opposed. The doctor regarded the people over the Kouban in a somewhat milder light than the other, who would not allow the Circassians a single good quality, and even denied their bravery. I found equally contradictory statements in other parts of the East. Men who had resided for many years on the spot, among the same people, under equally favourable circumstances, had the most conflicting opinions of their value and importance. For example, what can be more contradictory than the opinions

entertained of the Turks. It is an axiom, that a country should never be judged from the account of one single author. . Correct objective perception is a rare quality, and impartiality is observed by only a few.

Though the Circassians have their native doctors, and have a high opinion of their skill, yet they gladly have recourse to Russian surgeons. I do not know a single people in the East, which does not place the most implicit reliance in European physicians. The Kabyles and Arabs in Algeria readily consult the French *chirurgiens majors*, and the Circassians and Tschetschensians on the Kouban and Terek, come down to the Russian apothecary, if their own doctors can do them no good.

The European doctor is held in high esteem even by the Koords, and the devil-worshipping Yezidees. Hence the German doctor had a fair Circassian practice, and ventured as a *hakim** over the Kouban into districts where every other European would have lost his life

* Physician (Arabicè). The term is in general use throughout the East.

or his freedom. He admitted that, generally speaking, his philanthropic exertions had not elicited much gratitude, yet he thought that some of his Caucasian friends had testified their friendship, and shown a noble spirit. From among the numerous tales and episodes that he related to us that evening, I shall introduce the following extracts, which I find in my Caucasian diary.

"It is a prevalent opinion," began the doctor, "among the Russians and Cossacks, that a war of extermination should be waged against the Circassians, because these people are perfectly incapable of appreciating gentleness, friendship and benefits conferred, are unsusceptible of any generous emotion, and because it is impossible to civilize them. Many instances of Circassian barbarity—fearful examples of retaliation, demoniacal acts of villainy, will be related to you, in support of this opinion, and, possibly, these statements may contain half the truth. But whoever looks at all deeply into the matter will not subscribe unconditionally to a condemnatory verdict, and will attribute many terrible events to circumstances. Many of their chief crimes may, to a certain extent, be excused by

reason of their peculiar position ; as, for instance, sale of their children. The latter go to pass a happy and a splendid existence at Stamboul ; and the price of their beauty probably rescues their family from starvation, or procures them powder and shot to defend their independence. The Circassians are a poor people ; their rugged land is wanting in almost every necessary. When we consider the extreme disproportion between our means and those of the Circassians, we ought not to wonder if they resort to desperate expedients. Engaged in perpetual warfare, and pledged by oath to resist the Russian yoke to the last drop of their blood, their manners cannot assume a more gentle character, without paralyzing their powers of resistance. Nor have the Russians invariably, on their part, given a pattern of exemplary humanity. I do not, on this account, accuse our generals ; for the sternest discipline is often unable to prevent terrible excesses in war. Blood calls for blood, and if an aoul is carried with the bayonet, it is puerile to talk of brotherly love. Even the most refined officers, on such occasions, listen more readily to the voice of revenge, than to the counsels of policy, or the

dictates of humanity. This lies in the very nature of the thing. Benevolent philanthropists may twaddle otherwise, but they do not know what war is, or what man is with all his passions.

"The charge of black criminality and incurable barbarism, brought against the Circassians, is just as ridiculous as the absurd admiration expressed for them by our countryman, the botanist, Charles Koch, and a posse of sentimental German poets. I have, moreover, some motives for vindicating them against this accusation, drawn from my personal experience. I grant that my Circassian practice did not bring me in much profit. (The mountaineers are generally not satisfied with medicine alone, but expect a present with it.) Yet I owe my life to a Circassian cured by me, and this, after all is the handsomest fee that can be given to a doctor. Listen to my story, and judge for yourself. Thirteen years ago I was stationed with my regiment at Stavropol. I was at that time a private soldier, but do not imagine that my lot was so deplorable as that of the Russian grey-coat. Degradation to the ranks is of frequent occurrence in Russia, and a

man of education and position, who is reduced from the Tchin to the rank of a private, not for some dishonourable crime, but on account of a common misdemeanour, such as carelessness in the management of crown property, an error in subordination, the impetuosity of temper, or great peevishness and severity, is never exposed to all the hardships of a common soldier. His superiors are always very considerate to him ; each of them endeavours, as far as possible, to alleviate his lot. No man is safe in Russia, and the same thing may happen to them any day. How many former generals are now carrying muskets ! Hence it is good policy for every officer to strive to alleviate the condition of those reduced to the ranks, as he thereby secures grateful friends to himself in case of a similar mishap befalling him. I must say, that during the long period that I served as common soldier, my officers always behaved rather as friends than as superiors to me. I was always admitted into the society of the sub-officers, and chatted, drank, and played with them as an equal. This feature of Russian character, *i. e.* the mitigation of the severity of the system by considerate treatment of those reduced in rank, deserves our commendation.

"One evening I sat at play at Stavropol with two young lieutenants, when my orderly entered with the announcement, that orders had just been issued to march to Kawkaskaia. I might have easily avoided this march, by shamming sickness. But heated by wine, being in an adventurous mood, and hoping to encounter some romantic episodes, I felt a strong desire to join the expedition. I seized my musket and cartouche box, placed myself in rank and file, and we marched off to the beat of the drum; my wife knew nothing about it. This sudden departure was occasioned by a despatch from the commandant of the fort of Kawkaskaia, containing a pressing demand for reinforcements, as the spies had informed him that he must prepare for the assault of a very large body of Circassians. When we reached the Kouban, the incursion of the mountaineers had already taken place. But we found the whole Cossack population on foot, and the infantry and cannon prepared for the foe. We endeavoured to cut off the retreat of the enemy from the Kouban, and after a slight resistance they dispersed and fled. A great portion of them sought refuge in the thickets and reeds, but one body, pressed

on all sides, rushed into a post-station, cut down the secretary, ostlers, and guards, and barricaded themselves in the house. The Cossacks of the Line attempted to storm it at once, but the Circassians defended themselves like devils. Some dozen Cossacks were shot off their horses, and the foremost assailants were cut to pieces at the door. The Cossacks drew back, delayed and awaited the infantry. My company received orders to carry the post-house at the point of the bayonet. Our general was on the spot in person, his fiery red countenance, rendered purple with wrath and vodka. He bawled a fearful oath at our captain, because he thought that he did not march fast enough, and that he was shy of Circassian bullets. General —ki was a man of coarse mind and barbarous severity. In his fits of passion, he frightened us ten times more than all the Circassians put together. His curses gave wings to the legs of our captain, and the whole company set off running to storm the station. The windows were broken, the doors burst in, we fought in the house and the stables, and after twenty minutes of an indescribably murderous conflict, not a Circassian stirred, but all our officers and one-third of our men had fallen on the spot.

"When all was over, the wounded had been transported to the Krepost, and we were in the act of burying the dead in a large pit, it happened that an old Circassian recovered consciousness, and looked earnestly with his large eyes, at the soldiers who were about to cast him in as a corpse. A soldier was raising his piece to run him through, when I interfered. The Circassian who was awaiting the mortal stroke with perfect serenity, excited my compassion in a greater degree than I have ever experienced on other occasions, and in all the warlike scenes of a twenty year's military life in the Caucasus.

"You have no conception how beautiful this old man was, and what noble eyes he had. Notwithstanding the blood that disfigured his face, and his silvery beard, I thought I had never seen a more venerable head ; and he could not have created a more painful interest if he had been my own father. It is not uncommon for those whose finer feelings are not quite extinguished by the horrors of war, to experience revulsions like this, after the heat of the fight is over. As long as the conflict rages, and your blood boils, the most good-natured soldier is merciless. An hour sooner, I should not have

warded off the bayonet from the old man ; perhaps I should have run him through myself. I could mention numerous instances of humanity, especially in Poles ; but I never saw them in the heat of battle. The smell of powder, and the clash of bayonets and schaschkas seem to extinguish pity in the softest hearts. Men of gentle nature are especially rare under the Russian colours, compared with those who have no feelings. The former are commonly young hands ; for war corrupts and destroys the noblest natures, and in the Caucasus sooner than elsewhere.

"I caused the Circassian to be carried to the hospital of the Krepost, where one of my friends acted as chief surgeon. There was plenty of work for me now. I obtained leave of absence from barrack duty ; and I exchanged the musket for the scalpel, a common accident in my life. Many Russians, as well as my Circassian, required amputation. I cut off three fingers from his left hand. His right arm, which was much more injured, and his bad wound in the head, healed of themselves. When he was nearly cured, I took him to my room, where my wife, who had followed me from

Stavropol, nursed him very kindly. His convalescence gave me greater pleasure than I ever experienced from the cure of any other patient. The Circassian was a Mollah ; the beauty of his head gave an intimation of his gentle character and his piety. I procured him a Koran, in which he read from morning till night ; and he was much given to prayer, which is not very usual with the Circassians. One day I made a little trip with my doctor along the Line, in order to visit patients. When I returned, I learnt with surprise that my old Circassian was flown. He was not very narrowly watched, because he was considered to be too weak to run away. About noon, he had crept to the banks of the river, where he used often to go and warm his limbs in the sun. There he prayed, and then the sentry saw him plunge into the river, and swim across with powerful strokes. I remained some time longer at Kaukaskaja ; but I heard nothing more of him. Nevertheless, my wife fancied that a quarter of lamb, which was brought as a present by a common Circassian, came from the old man.

“ Five years later, I was removed again to the Kouban, where I was directed to establish a

hospital. I had been restored, in the interim, to the rank of officer, and had an appointment as assistant-surgeon. I was often visited by invalid Circassians; and I made occasional visits to their aouls, where I invariably met with a hospitable reception. The usual fee of a doctor in those mountains, consists of milk, honey, bread, grapes, and wine, and, as a rarity, half a lamb. Money is seldom or never given by the Circassians, even if they are tormented by a painful malady. They prefer to meet death with stoical indifference, rather than pay a couple of silver roubles for a glass of physic. One day, a blooming young Circassian called upon me, and begged me to visit his grandfather, who was ill in a neighbouring aoul of the Psadook tribe. He assured me that I should be quite satisfied with my fee. I was in a bad temper; and having no inclination for the ride, I bluntly declined the proposition of the young man, notwithstanding the gentle but pressing supplication he made, that I would accede to it. He persisted, however, in his request; he would absolutely take no refusal, and swore solemnly that if I went, I should far from repent of it. At length, he offered me a handful of roubles,

which I might keep as a security, if I happened not to be satisfied with the fee for my visit. Such an offer was very unusual ; and I had never seen a disposition of this sort in the Circassian character. I might have been offended with good reason at the proposition ; but the open countenance of the young mountaineer, who had scarcely emerged from boyhood, his honest look and noble bearing, ended by inspiring me with confidence and sympathy. In a querulous tone, I ordered my servant to saddle my horse, and crossed over the Kouban at Ustlaba, accompanied by my Cossack servant and the Circassian.

“The aoul was represented by the youth as being only fifteen versts distant from Ustlaba. But we proceeded much farther without seeing the aoul. My servant became anxious, and drew my attention to the circumstance, that we had already passed the dwelling-place of the Psadooks ; and I began to share his suspicions. To add to our annoyance, the road became more difficult, passing through endless bogs and reedy thickets. I no longer ventured to think of returning, and complained bitterly to my guide that he had led me astray. But he remained perfectly placid, looked at me as

honestly as before : and when he perceived that my anxiety was nevertheless on the increase, he handed me his pistols, with the words : ' Shoot me, if you find yourself deceived by me.' At length, we caught sight of an aoul in a mountain ravine, which the youth pointed out to us.

" I was led into the principal house, which was surmounted by a square tower with battlements. An old man was seated in the second room, wrapped in his burka. He arose on my entrance, and saluted me in a very dignified manner by placing both hands on his heart. Imagine my astonishment, when I recognized him as my old patient of Kaukaskaja ! Our recognition and salutation was very hearty ; and soon his sons, daughters, grandsons and granddaughters advanced to salute their guest. All asked me about my wife, who had nursed the old man so carefully, and expressed their sorrow when they heard that she was dead. I cannot speak in too high terms of the handsome and flattering reception I encountered from all, including the young and beautiful girls, who, though more graceful than the most elegant Parisians, were very coarsely attired. Their faces were unveiled ; and they did not show the least

constraint in their demeanour, as is usual with other Mohammedan females. Carpets and burkas were arranged to give me a comfortable seat; bread, honey, wine, and fruit, coffee and viands were handed to me; and a whole lamb was placed on a spit, to roast over the charcoal. Never in my whole life have I felt so much professional pleasure as I experienced in the family circle of this most grateful Caucasian patient.

“Arti-Mollah—such was the old man’s name—appeared the most important individual in the aoul, and the respect in which he was held was attested by the circumstance that none of the nobles even ventured to sit down in his presence. My enquiry as to who required my advice, met with no direct reply, but I was informed that I should see in the evening. Soon after this, there was a great stir in the aoul, much tumult and noise were perceptible without, one band of knights arrived after another, and even before nightfall some thousands of Circassians were encamped on the slopes of the mountains. I now began to perceive that a military expedition was projected, and I became deeply concerned. The young people bustled about in all directions,

but the old Mollah remained perfectly tranquil, seated by my side. The room gradually filled with guests, who all appeared chieftains of the highest rank, haughty, magnificent men, glittering with the most splendid arms. The Mollah entered into an animated conversation with them in the Adighè language, which I do not understand ; he seemed to be relating his connection with me. Their eagle eyes were fixed on me : long did they measure me with the most intent observation, and then they addressed me politely in the Tartar tongue, in which language the conversation was continued, as most of them understood it.

" At this moment, which was one of such painful anxiety to me, I did not think it opportune to press my old host with questions. But when the room became gradually empty, and the splendid knights and horsemen seemed to have withdrawn, I ventured to request an explanation of the riddle. An attack was projected on the stanitza where I had established a hospital. A Polish deserter was their guide, and the Circassians appeared confident of success. Arti-Mollah knew that I was living there, he had induced me to leave it the day before the

projected attack on the stanitza, in order to save my life, and to this end he had sent his grandson to me with a pretended message. Unhappily the result only justified too well the daring confidence of the foe. They crossed the river during a pitch-dark night, without having attracted the observation of the Cossack outposts. The morning mist permitted the Circassians to creep close up to the stanitza, and the Polish deserter showed them the place where entrance was the easiest. Seldom has an incursion across the Kouban been more successful. The whole population of the stanitza was surprised in sleep, the sentries were cut down, only a few succeeding in escaping in their shirts, most of the men were put to death, the women and children were bound on to the horses, and carried off across the river. If the Mollah had not induced me to leave, I should have undoubtedly perished, like most of my acquaintance. Whether I would or not, I was forced to stay as guest or half a prisoner, in the house of Arti-Mollah, who was too old and infirm to follow the others ; whilst the men of his family accompanied the expedition. During their absence, I was entertained in the most hospitable and kindly manner,

by the old man, the women and the girls. Their hospitality extended even to my Cossack servant, whom they treated at first rather harshly, shutting him up in the stable, but whom, at my request, they liberated and proceeded to treat with more civility. On the following night the expedition returned. Their approach and their triumph were proclaimed afar off by the shouts of the horsemen, heavily laden with booty and prisoners, by the firing of muskets and other tokens of rejoicing. My Cossack was frightened to death when he saw his wife and youngest boy among the prisoners, and he was almost beside himself with distress of mind. Arti-Mollah would not at first listen to my request, that they should at once be set at liberty, but he ultimately acceded, when I became more pressing. The matter was attended with many difficulties, though the Circassian who had possession of Peter's wife and child belonged to the same tribe as Arti-Mollah. My Cossack was obliged to pledge himself to provide four oxen and thirty sheep as a compensation for them, I stood security for him, and Peter recovered those whom he had lost. We were forced to pass two more days in the house of our *konak*. The room was never empty of guests,

and I became personally acquainted, on this occasion, with the most renowned Circassian champions, princes, and knights, the Pschi Selim, the old veteran Guz Beg, Dschimbulat, the lion of the Caucasus, Mansur Beg, and many others. I was also consulted by a crowd of patients who came to me for advice and physic. At length, I was suffered to depart with my man Peter. My old friend took leave of me in the same solemn and dignified manner as when he received me ; many members of his family saluted me in rotation, with the most amiable and affectionate demonstrations. Amongst them, I must mention a lovely grand-daughter, graceful and rosy, the most beautiful nymph of the Caucasus that I ever beheld, and whom I should have greatly preferred to carry back across the Kouban, instead of the splendid horse which was presented to me by the old man, and which, though a veteran, still remains the greatest ornament of my stable. Escorted by a few knights, we reached the Russian border without accident, and my adventure excited no little sensation, for such an instance of Circassian gratitude was unprecedented.

“ Arti-Mollah is still living, but since his aoul

has been visited by the foe, he dwells more in the heart of the mountains, and has joined the neutral tribes. He is reported to be still engaged without intermission in preaching hatred and war against the Russians. It is remarkable, however, that I have never heard a syllable from him since that time. I have occasionally sent messengers to him with a pressing request for the exchange of prisoners, but I never received any answer. Perhaps the old man thinks that he has quite repaid his debt of gratitude, by the service that he rendered me on that occasion, and possibly he now only looks upon me as a Russian, an enemy, and an infidel, and not as the friend and physician who once healed, tended, and nursed him."

CHAPTER V.

Nature on the Kouban—Original dwelling of the Cossacks, and signification of their name—Love of the Cossacks for an adventurous Life—Evening Walk by the Kouban—Rapidity of travelling in Russia—Surprisal of Wassirniskaja—The Line Cossacks—Massacre of a Cossack Detachment at Ustlaba—Visit to the Left Bank of the Kouban—Line Cossacks and Circassians—Arrival at Stavropol.

GEOLOGISTS and artists must be driven to despair by the uniform level prevailing along the Kouban, without the relief of a mountain, hill, or rock, whilst even boulder stones are sought for in vain along the banks of its sluggish current.

On the other hand, my eyes were greeted with an animated military spectacle, and I devoted all my observation to the Cossacks, and their

mode of life, strolled about their dirty capital of Ekaterinodar, prowled into the market, the houses, hovels, rooms, courts and gardens, examining all in detail, and was not at all embarrassed in my movements, because a bad cold prevented my perceiving the strong odours attaching to Cossack houses and persons. The Circassians would naturally have been the favourite objects of my attention, but, with the exception of the Psadook chief, Chora Beg, the other Caucasian visitors showed little disposition to converse with me; hence I dismissed my courteous interpreter, and kept to the more accessible Cossacks, pledged them in a glass of vodka, in their little houses, and kept both ears open when they, or my friend the doctor, related numerous episodes of their vicissitudes, hardships, and adventures. We often discussed the early history and probable origin of the Cossacks, and Tschernomorski officers confirmed what I had often heard advanced by the Don Cossacks, *i. e.*, that the Cossacks, as far as they could trust tradition, even before the time of Peter the Great, were not confined to the Ukraine, but that their territory stretched southward as far as Bessarabia, and eastward beyond the left

bank of the Don, and that even since Yermak's first visit to Siberia, many bands of Cossacks used to rove through the great world of steppes, as adventurers, and formed settlements in certain districts, where the situation, game, and abundance of fish invited them. Even to the northward, the Cossacks extended beyond the borders of the Ukraine, as far as Great Russia. The annals of the age of Vassily the Blind, in the year 1444, make mention of the Russian Cossacks as a peculiar kind of light troops; whilst the name occurs for the first time in 1517. Even Karamsin is of opinion that the name of Cossacks was known in Great Russia before the invasion of Batu, and that it was applied to the Torks, or Berendejes, whose territory extended as far as the Dnieper. It is on the Dnieper below Kief, that the first dwellings of the Malo-Russian Cossacks occur at present. The Torks and Berendejes were often styled Tscherkessians by the Muscovites, a name also applied to all the Cossacks, although the Great Russians had no connection whatever in those early times with the Caucasian Circassians. It is probable that separate Cossack settlements extended at a remote period as far as the Oural river, and the

present Oural Cossacks, though wilder and more picturesque than their brethren on the Don, speak a genuine Sclavonic idiom. When the Empress Catherine removed a portion of the Ukraine Cossacks to the right bank of the Don, they were not transported among a strange people, for besides the Calmucks and Nogays, they had genuine Cossack tribes for their neighbours on the left bank, who had already carried on an independent war against the Crimean Khans for many years.

We had many discussions about the origin of the name Cossack. My friends were not a little wrath to hear that a philologist, Klaproth, had affirmed that the word meant in Tartar, a robber. I tranquillized them by adding, that the great Russian historian had stood up to defend their honourable name against the linguist, maintaining that the word Cossack, far from meaning a rascal, signified a *volunteer*, *partizan*, *dare-devil*, and that it could not have been a term of reproach at any time, as it was only applied to bold soldiers who bled and died for freedom, country, and religion ! This pleased my acquaintances much better, and taking long draughts from the brandy glass, they gave Klap-

roth many a groan, and Karamsin some hearty cheers. They had never cumbered their wits much about such matters heretofore, nor had they ever read Klaproth or Karamsin. Their favourite delights consist of vodka, dice, and cards ; these are also their scriptures, and their morning and evening prayers. It is the opinion of profound and philosophical thinkers, that there exists a law of progress and humanity, by means of which, culture and civilization will eventually spread over the whole earth ; they maintain, that this law is as necessary and undeniable as the physical motion of the earth, and the circulation of the blood. The truth and depth of these views are strongly demonstrated, even in the land of the Scyths, when you perceive that a French confectioner deals in champagne of the first quality, at four silver roubles (twelve shillings) for a foaming bottle ; on the Tanais, that at Novo-Tscherkask, graceful Cossack maidens dance quadrilles almost as elegantly as Parisians, and that at Ekaterinodar, whist and *preference* have become the favourite pastime of Cossack society. When will the other blessings of Western civilization follow ? When shall we read that the Cossack

booksellers, in the catalogue of the fair at Ekaterinodar, advertise ten thousand new titles of forthcoming volumes.

I met here, a captain, who had accompanied the last friendly landing of the Russians at Constantinople, and who had inscribed his name on a plane tree at Unkiar-Skelessi. How this man regretted that Ibrahim had not been more rash, and marched against Stamboul. This would have given the Cossacks the desired opportunity of measuring their lances against the scymetars of the Egyptians, and a more attractive field than the Caucasus would have opened up to Russian lust for fighting and plunder. The captain imagined that the Russian eagle would have advanced, at least, as far as the Holy Land, perhaps to Egypt; that he would have drank the water of the Nile, and seen the Pyramids! I comforted the Tchernomorsk with the assurance that there were better things to taste and see in Germany, and I gave him an account of the manufactories of Esslingen and Leipzig, preparatory to the time when a second Attila or Suwarrow shall fulfill the intense desire of these hairy steppe horsemen to become more familiarly acquainted with

them. I informed him that Esslingen champagne is a greater restorative than the slimy Nile water, and if the ancient Egyptians left stone pyramids to their descendants, Leipzig printers and scribbling sages are honestly employed in piling up pyramids of books for their contemporaries.

The evening before my departure from Ekaterinodar, I strolled again to the banks of the memorable river, which has carried so many thousand drops of Russian and Circassian blood to the sea. It flows very near the fort, and has here a breadth of two hundred paces, rather steep and sandy banks, and is said to be very deep. Though no rain had fallen for some days, the water was of a dirty brown colour; its course is just as sluggish as that of the Rion below Maran, and its fall between Ekaterinodar and the Black Sea, scarcely amounts to one hundred feet. On the opposite bank, you perceive several aouls of friendly tribes of Circassians. The smoke of the turf fire rose over the huts, and herds of cattle were feeding peacefully by their side. At such a sight, no one would have thought of the deadly feuds of this country, or that

the people were in a state of perpetual warfare. But if you cast your eye on the right bank, it met, all along the stream, numerous airy stations of the Cossacks, perched on four high beams, where the sentry's post presents the appearance of a dove cot in a German village. A bad ladder leads up to it, and above sits a Tchernomorski, almost like a statue, in his sheep-skin coat, keeping his eyes eternally fixed on the hostile bank. He is perched so high, that you can scarcely see his long moustachios, and as a comfort, in his tedious duty, he has a bottle of brandy for a companion. From that elevation, his glance commands the plain to a great distance, yet it is not always able to penetrate the reed thickets, and the brush-wood. The enemy often deceive his hawk's eyes, and he only becomes aware of their passage, when it is too late to give the signal of alarm. Should he even escape the Circassian kinschal on such occasions, he is sure to receive a good thrashing from the Russians. At Ekaterinodar you cannot obtain a sight of any hostile villages, for they only begin in the ravines of the mountains. Even the Caucasus does not stand forth very majes-

tically near this town, yet the outline of the snow-covered chain, presented a finer and more definite appearance than on the tedious drive from Taman across the steppe.

The following day, my escort was punctually at the door. It consisted of eight Tchernomorski troopers, with red lances, but without any special uniform, some being clad in grey infantry coats, whilst others wore sheep-skin wrappers over their broad shoulders. Besides their lance, they carried a musket, without a bayonet, slung across their back in their leather cross-belt. The carriage was drawn across the steppe at the usual impetuous speed, by four well-fed Cossack horses. The yamschik seldom made use of the whip, but the penetrating tones of his bass voice were enough to spur on his steeds with the speed of the wind. This is the mode of travelling in Russia, to cut short the immense distances. A king, in his travels in Germany, does not get on so fast as any functionary in Russia, with an Imperial Padaroschna in his pocket. When the roads are as dry as they were during my gallop across the steppes of the Kouban, you advance at least half as fast as on the railroads in Germany.

This cannot, of course, be effected without much cruelty to animals, and no post-horse in Russia attains the usual age, most of them being driven to death after a few years. The great abundance of horses, however, prevents people from caring much about their loss. If the population increase, and the pasture-lands diminish, the case will be altered. Not only did my escort always keep up with the carriage, but one of the troopers usually darted ahead, to take on my order for another escort to the next station. Before my carriage reached it, eight fresh lancers generally galloped up to meet me, and relieve my old escort. Though the presence of these troopers did not add much to our security, they afforded us much entertainment, for these wild lancers looked very picturesque, on their long-maned horses, and balancing their long spears in the air with much dexterity, they afforded an agreeable relief to the eye, amidst the monotony of the steppe.

The first great Cossack stanitza that we reached, was called Karsundskaja; it was protected by a ditch and a hedge of thorns. The nearer you approach the villages of the Line Cos-

sacks, the stronger became the villages, for danger increases as you go east, where the depth and width of the river diminishes, and most of the incursions take place. We found active preparations in the village of Wassirinskaja. Scouts had informed the commandant of Ustlaba of an anticipated attack of the enemy across the river. He had sent a pressing request for reinforcements to General Gurko, and an infantry regiment, commanded by the German Colonel Witzinghof, had started in forced marches from Stavropol to the right wing. Two cannon had just been brought into Wassirinskaja, under the escort of a hundred Tchernomorski troopers, the infantry was under arms, and the whole Cossack population had their lances at hand, and their horses saddled. Though the danger appeared near and pressing—(for the spies stated that three thousand Circassian cavaliers were assembled at the foot of the mountains) the Russians and Cossacks looked quiet enough, and no fear or excitement was to be traced in their impassive countenances. It was impossible to discover if the severity of military discipline kept under all expression of surprise, or if familiarity with danger, devastation and death

had blunted their feelings. My companion, M. V—f, explained to me that greater preparations and precautions were employed at this stanitza than elsewhere. This post had been attacked and partially burned by the Circassians, in January, 1842, many Cossacks had fallen on that occasion, and about sixty women and children had perished in the flames. M. V—f, happened to be staying at Wassirinskaja on that dreadful night, when on his road to join his regiment at Sundscha. His lively description of the horrors of the fight and conflagration, though given with the coolness and plain manner of a soldier, who thought it nothing out of the way, and who did not strive to produce an effect, by exaggerated pathos, working on the nerves of his audience, was more graphic and moving than the extravagant episodes of an accomplished novelist. The effect of his story may certainly have been heightened by the fact that we were on the scene of its performance, and that the danger of the moment kept all minds in suspense. I shall only repeat the essential points of his narrative.

“Information,” began my companion, “had been received from the spies, that the Circassians were assembling in the mountains, and infantry

pickets were distributed in all the villages. But the scouts had also informed General S—i, that they should obtain certain intelligence of the day of their passage, so soon as the Usdens had come to a determination on the subject. It is usual in Circassia to discuss and dispute for a fortnight, before the incursion takes place, hence most expeditions to the right bank are failures. The Russians were misled by these promises of their paid spies, and General S—i hoped to inflict a severe punishment on the assailants. Unhappily the incursion of the Circassians took place five days sooner than had been anticipated. Mansur Beg had detected treachery, had suddenly dissolved the assembly in which he had a principal voice, and had hurried to the Kouban with twelve hundred horsemen, whilst the remaining chieftains were still quarrelling about the period when the projected expedition should take place. Our informers were themselves duped, and had no time to apprise General S—i of Mansur's sudden departure. I had met some companions at Wassirinskaja, and we chatted together till midnight. Excitement and unusual anxiety, which must surely have been the work of my guardian angel, kept me long from sleeping. I

was lying dozing, when a noise without roused me. I immediately apprehended danger, and darted out in my shirt. Not a shot had been fired, but I immediately recognized the jackall-like *schream* of the enemy—I had heard it often before in the mountains, through the fresh morning air, when I was bivouacking with my tirailleurs at the van-guard. It is still a mystery to me how the Circassians could penetrate into the well guarded stanitza, without being perceived by the videttes. Our infantry, which consisted of a company and a half, only began to open its fire when half the village was in possession of the enemy, and notwithstanding the moonlight, their balls did us more mischief than the Circassians. I endeavoured first to take refuge with the infantry which had formed in the square around the guard-house. But the Circassians had intercepted the way, and I could do nothing better than leap over the hedges and ditches, and conceal myself outside the stanitza.

“ Most of the families were inclosed in their houses, and sought to defend themselves in them ; but the mountaineers laid piles of hay and straw against them to burn them down. A frightful

conflagration was the result, lighting up with its dreadful glare, the stanitza and the sky ; it was almost as light as day. Those shut up in their houses rushed out and tried to cut their way through, but the schaschka of the cruel foe drove them back. You should have heard the cries of the poor women amidst the flames and smoke ! Many preferred being burned to death to slavery, and the Circassians did not make many prisoners. I succeeded, at length, in reaching the guard-house. If the occasion had been less appalling, I could not have helped laughing at the appearance of our soldiers, who most of them were standing under arms, without trousers, and were continually loading and firing. We stood firm, the light of the conflagration assisted our aim, and the Circassians did not dare to close with us with the sword ; unhappily, we were not strong enough to attack them with the bayonet. Day-break put an end to the conflict, and the enemy drew off almost uninjured, with booty, prisoners, and their dead. When General S—i, arrived from Ekaterinodar, with a regiment of Cossacks, the mountaineers had vanished, and the general only witnessed the results of this fearful night ; the

smoking ruins of the houses, the blackened and mutilated remains of those burned or slain, weeping mothers, seeking their children, weeping children seeking their mothers, and dumb pallid fathers who did not dare to weep. Our brave infantry presented arms without trousers, before the well defended guard-house."

The stanitza of Waroneschkaja, forms the limit between Tchernomorzia, and the territory of the Cossacks of the Line. The latter are distinguished by special dress, physical frame, features, and a peculiar and strong religious disposition, which displays itself, however, more in external forms than in exemplary virtues. Their dress and arms are the same as the Circassians, with whom, I at first, confounded them, much to my consternation. They carry the schaschka and pistols ; and their make is much more elegant and supple, but far less robust, than that of the Tchernomorski. They are reckoned more efficient soldiers than the latter. By the abduction of women and children from the mountains, they have obtained a great infusion of Circassian blood, and have inherited along with it the main virtue of the mountaineers—bravery.

The Russian Generals are indebted to the Line Cossacks for their most successful strokes in the Caucasus. The Russian officers commonly speak with contempt and disparagement of the Don Cossacks, who only remaining three years in the Caucasus, are less initiated in this kind of warfare, and appear slow and clumsy beside the dexterity of the Line Cossacks on the Terek and Upper Kouban. The author of the well-known English book, "Revelations of Russia," besides countless other errors, has committed that of ascribing the defence of the plains of southern Russia, near the Caucasus, entirely to the Tchernomorski Cossacks, declaring the latter to be the best irregular cavalry in the Russian service, whilst he appears entirely ignorant of the Cossacks of the Line, most of whom do not derive their origin from the Ukraine.

The incursions of the Circassians do not succeed so often among the Line Cossacks, who are always prepared, and defend themselves desperately, as among the Tchernomorski, though the Upper Kouban presents more favourable ground for the mountaineers, than the lower course of the stream. From Waroneschkaja to

Kaukaskaja, the traveller encounters a warlike population, always ready for the strife; and even the young boys are ever ready to ride forth beside their bearded fathers, if the object be to hunt the enemy among the bushes. The Tchernomorski are lazier, less vigilant, and less disposed to cross the Kouban, and close with the foe. I often found these Cossacks moody, and with dejected looks, lying on the grass by their saddled steeds, which were quietly cropping the turf, when the men had been ordered to explore the thickets. If my travelling companion remonstrated with them on the subject, they rose up slowly, grasping their red lances, and yawning.

Ten days before my arrival at the stanitsa Ustlaba, the Circassians had crossed the river between Waroneschkaja, and the former place. According to Russian accounts, which generally exaggerate the numbers of their enemies, they were three thousand strong. They seem to have been induced to make the attempt, owing to the low state of the water, and for the same reason they were collecting again in the mountains, for another attack. A thick fog, common in these steppes, at this season, had concealed

the large body of cavalry from the Cossack outposts. The enemy drew up along the high road, and it has not been ascertained whether they purposed an attack against the strong krepost Ustlaba, or against some of the weaker stanitzas. Before they reached a certain village, they came suddenly on a detachment of fifty Cossacks, escorting a gun. Owing to the dense fog, the hostile cavalry scarcely saw each other ere they came in contact. Flight was impossible for the Cossacks of the Line, but they defended themselves like men. Forty-seven of them were cut down, and only three were captured and carried over the Kouban with the gun. The Circassians did not undertake anything more; probably they thought the Cossacks were the rear-guard of a division, whereas their destination had been to escort the field-piece to Waroneschkaja. Not far from the former quarantine of Ustlaba, they showed us the spot where the bodies of the forty-seven Cossacks had been found. I now thanked my stars for my compulsory detention at Taman, and I was loud in the praises of the Black Sea storms, for on reckoning upon what day I should have reached Ustlaba, if I had not been

detained at Kertch, Feodosia and Taman, I found that it would have been the very time when the Cossack detachment, in question, had been massacred. If we had not been preserved by an unusual accident, my neck and that of my companions would have made a close acquaintance with Circassian steel, or we should have enjoyed the interesting experience of slavery amongst the Caucasian rocks. I had a warm debate with my companions, as to the course we should adopt in the event of being attacked. Successful resistance was out of the question. We were only fourteen men in all, and imperfectly armed. The Circassians seldom cross the Kouban less than two hundred strong. Our escort would probably have given their horses the rein. Their only use is as scouts to apprise you of an attack beforehand. But this can only be done when the country is an open one; amongst thickets you run the greatest risk.

Ustlaba is one of the largest villages in the territory of the Cossacks of the Line. The little houses with thatched roofs, are built in staring, straight lines, like a battalion drawn up in rank and file. The white church with its green cupola, a tower and turrets, standing

in the midst of the place, presents a very picturesque appearance. The fortress of Ust-labinskaja, situated at the distance of a rifle-shot from the village, is more strongly fortified than any of the outposts on the Kouban. We passed the night here, and enjoyed the military tumult that filled the place. Spies had just come down from above, and had been closeted in a private interview with the commandant. The hostile assembly of Usdens took place on the left bank of the Laba; the point where the passage was to be effected was not yet known to the scouts, but the Circassians were hourly expected, and the garrison passed the night under arms. Before sunset, I strolled outside the stanitza, by the bank of the river, my faithful rifle in my hand.

I took advantage of this opportunity to examine the left bank, and caused myself to be ferried over. The ground was covered with a high growth of brushwood, and the silence of evening was only broken by the stroke of the woodman's axe. The repose, and the peaceful occupations of the fishermen and wood-cutter, formed a striking contrast to the movement and the ringing of arms inside the

fort and the stanitza. Whilst there was an almost total dearth of wild trees and bushes on the right bank, the hills on the left presented a rich growth of timber, and the farther you advanced towards the Laba, the higher and more majestic appeared the growth of the oaks and beech trees. I saw no trace of aouls in the neighbourhood; but ten versts to the southward, columns of smoke were seen eddying up, which must have proceeded from the charcoal fires of Circassian villages. Russian guests would not fare very well there, thought I, as I re-crossed the river to the right bank, for even the Cossack woodmen warned me not to remain on that dangerous ground after nightfall. I did not inflict my presence on the commandant of Ustlabinskaja, as the poor man was almost at his wits' end, what with hurry, writing despatches, and receiving messages. He had, however, provided comfortable quarters for me in the stanitza, where I received the visits of some young officers, including an interesting Pole, who heartily embraced my attendant, when he heard that he was a Hungarian. Our conversation related to the danger to which the place was exposed,

and the probable place where the enemy's blow would fall. We also spoke of the destruction of the last detachment of Cossacks. News had been received of the three prisoners, and measures were in agitation for their recovery by ransom, through the medium of the neutral tribes. Half the garrison spent the night under arms, and the remainder slept with their clothes on, and their arms at their side. Even the stout lad of my Cossack host, a boy of five years of age, showed me his firelock.

The golden dawn shone bright and merry through the chinks of the Cossack house. The Circassians had kept aloof, and we all smiled at the terrors of the preceding evening. Forebodings and blue devils are fostered by the shades of evening ; every evil becomes doubly oppressive in the night ; whilst the cheerful light of day, chases away the spleen and black spectacles, and infuses courage and comfort once more into the heart. Seated in our coach, and galloping, as usual, full speed with our Cossack driver over the steppe, I felt quite joyful again ; the steppe wind whistled merrily behind us, a light purple hue tinged the pale blue horizon, and dew-drops glistened on the crowns of the

crocuses and snow-drops. Gazing at the splendour of the opening day, I could no longer comprehend the gloom of the previous night.

Between Ustlaba and Ladoschskaja, as also farther east, towards Stavropol, we often met single Circassian horsemen, who had crossed the Kouban with peaceful intentions. They cannot be distinguished from the Line Cossacks, in matters of dress and equipment. But the genuine Circassian type is not so prominent in the features of the latter; and it is generally easy to discriminate the Circassians, by the greater nobleness of their features, the delicately chizzelled aquiline nose, and the thick growth of dark coloured beard. And even if these characteristics were wanting, you could easily recognise the Circassians by their lofty bearing. Whilst all Cossacks who passed, pulled off their caps most humbly, even thirty paces before reaching us, the Circassians rode past proudly, without moving their hand to salute us. The men are usually handsomer than the women, among the Cossacks, as well as the Great Russians. Partly as a physiognomical study, I endeavoured to peep under the caps of all the Cossack women and

girls, at every halt we made at a stanitza. Hence, in my long transit from the Black Sea to the Terek, I must have carefully examined, at least, a thousand females ; yet it is only during my stay at the great stanitza of Kaukaskaja, that I find written down in my notebook, "At length again a pretty woman !" I did not see one face so comely as that of my hostess at Taman, during all my wanderings in the land of the Cossacks.

On the other hand, the male population appears to great advantage, especially in the great stanitzas of Ladoschskaja, Kasanskaja, and Kaukaskaja. The boys, who always ran to meet us in crowds, had intelligent, cheerful, and open-hearted faces, into which one could look with pleasure. The iron military code of Russia did not yet crush these poor lads ; they moved about unrestrained and merry, and looked at us with bold eyes. At the krepost Tifliskaja, I found a strong infantry garrison, under the German Colonel Wachsmund. At the village of Tinischberg, a Colonel Witzinghof was posted with his regiment ; and, in short, all along the line of the Kouban, there were alarming reports, and constant movements of troops.

Following the warning of the Cossack general, we never left our quarters too early, or reached them after dusk. It would be foolhardy to travel along the Kouban by night. The danger of incursions decreases as soon as you reach the fortress of Novo-Alexandropolskaja. At this place, the high road leaves the river, and passes near Tartar tribes, without seeing the Kouban again. Twenty-five versts before Stavropol, at Nova-Troizkaja, we left our Cossacks behind us, and proceeded to Stavropol without any escort. The character of the country, also, alters about here. During the whole journey from Taman to this place, the only undulations that appear on the right bank of the Kouban, are some Mogul mounds, few and far between, and the little molehills and piles raised by the steppe marmots. The only bushes and shrubs are the reeds by the river side, whilst on the Circassian bank, there is a considerable growth of timber, especially on the Upper Kouban. We lost sight of the distant Caucasian chain, even at Kaukaskaja, where you behold endless woody plains on the left bank, inhabited more by Nogay than by Circassian tribes. The

country is indescribably fruitful in this neighbourhood. A cloudy horizon prevented our seeing the icy giants of the Caucasus, even when we approached them more to the south ; and it was only at Ekaterinograd on the Terek,* that the mighty chain stood forth in all its grandeur. Before you come to Stavropol, the level steppe begins to be broken by hilly ground, consisting of a tertiary chalk formation, rich in fossil mussels, and covered with a slight growth of dwarf oak brushwood.

Stavropol is a light, airy and rather considerable town with uncommonly wide streets, in which horse-races might easily take place without inconvenience to pedestrians or passing equipages. I longed to make a present of one of these broad thoroughfares to the Romans, instead of their narrow gloomy Corso. I grant that the uncommon regularity of the straight, stiff streets of the capital of Cis-Caucasia remind one unpleasantly, like all Russian towns, of a military state, and the monotony of barrack life. Nevertheless, the sunshine and cleanliness, the elegant form of the modern houses, which

* Stavropol is 220 versts from Ekaterinograd, and is built on the river Ashla.

are painted white, with green roofs, create an agreeable impression, at least, at first. The general staff of the commanding officer of the Line is located at Stavropol, that officer being subordinate to the commanding officer at Tiflis, but, in reality, the conductor and manager of all considerable operations on the Kouban and the Terek.

An escort was given to me to use in all dangerous places on the Terek, by the civil, jolly, and corpulent chief of the staff of Cis-Caucasia, General Trasskin. Meanwhile, I gave myself a day's repose, and made an agreeable acquaintance with the occupant of the room next to mine, a Livonian captain, who passed a pleasant evening with me in animated conversation. The next day we started for the Terek steppe amidst showers of rain.

CHAPTER VI.

Political Relations of the Population of the Caucasian steppe
—The Georgiesk Market—Arrival in Ekaterinograd—A
View of the Caucasus — Pheasant Shooting — General
Gurko — Dangerous Travelling on the Terek — Vlad-
kaukas.

A FEW versts south of Stavropol, the hills with their tertiary fossil remains, and their small oak woods, disappear, and the bare, gloomy level of the steppe recommences. In clear weather, the tops of the highest Caucasian mountains, and especially the white pyramids of the Elbrus, are visible from Stavropol. We saw nothing of them ; for it rained continually. We performed the journey to Georgiesk tolerably quickly, as neither dangers nor curiosities induced us to halt anywhere. As far as Ekaterinograd on the Terek, a Russian general may

ride alone without an escort ; for on both sides the country, there dwell only friendly tribes of Nogay Tartars, and a few Kabardans. The latter, notwithstanding their pure Circassian blood, renounce the warlike spirit of their ancestors and their fellow-countrymen in the mountains. It is true that they are not attached to the Russians from partiality, and are almost as subdued by the pressure of circumstances as their Nogay neighbours. The inhabitants of the steppe, from the first, were never able to make any effectual resistance to the Russian bayonets ; and since their love of freedom did not extend so far as to exchange the rich pastures of Kabarda, and the comfortable life in the plains, with the dwellings between the rocky chasms and the eternal snows of the Caucasus, there remained no alternative for them but subjection.

The relations of these Kabardan and Nogay tribes must not be confounded with those of the neutral Caucasian tribes, on the left side of the Kouban. The latter have the mountains at hand as a refuge, and the warlike Mansur Beg, with his gallant followers, at a convenient distance ; for the Muscovites have not yet dared to send

the Russian Natschaliniks and Pristafs into their aouls, and make them acquainted with tributes and stripes, like the inhabitants of Georgia and Armenia. Towards the Kabardans, the government shows infinitely more consideration and forbearance than towards any other populations of the great southern Russian steppe, whose geographical position makes all escape impossible. A Russian *employé* holds his head much higher among the cowardly Nogay people on the Sea of Azoff, than in an aoul of the Kabardans, where he well knows that a highly aggrieved population, when irritated, will always find means of flying, leaving their immoveable property behind them, and of ultimately taking revenge. We must readily admit the wise circumspection and discretion of the Russian government, in the administration of the conquered provinces. The Tartars of the Crimea, the Nogays on the other side of Perekop, the Kalmucks on the Don and Manytsch, were obliged to yield unconditionally to the Russian system, they are heavily taxed, tremble if the Muscovite district-officer frowns upon them, and are only safe so long as a good, just, and humane Governor like Woronzoff,

being placed at the head of the administration, secures them from the excessive oppression of subordinate functionaries.

For more than forty years, the emigration of the inhabitants has not been permitted ; and, besides, the sea and the great distance, prevent them from escaping with their families and property. If, however, to-morrow, the Emperor Alexander command the introduction of a conscription (which the Tartars especially fear,) those races must immediately obey, for they are bereft of all means of resistance, as well as flight. The Cossack guards them near at hand, as the shepherd watches the sheep. The Kabardans, and in some measure, also, the Nogays in the great steppe between the Terek and Kouban, are treated with mildness as privileged subjects ; they pay only a small tax, and do not come under the rod of the Russian police. If seas or wastes lay between them and the sheltering rocky citadel of the Caucasus, that great refuge of all oppressed people, they would not be treated so gently. The Circassian tribes on the left bank of the Lower Kouban, are treated, on the other hand, as useful friends and allies, and not as subjects, because their

pliant disposition is known, and their assistance as scouts very useful.

Not only do they pay no tribute, but they enjoy peculiar commercial privileges, and they are well paid when they march with the Russian columns against the hostile mountaineers, whilst their most influential chieftains are frequently decorated. The populations composing the three races of the South-Russian and Caucasian steppes, fall into the three previous categories. The mountaineers alone enjoy independance; nevertheless, one-tenth of their clans side with Russia, partly owing to the vicinity of the Muscovite fortresses, partly owing to material advantages, or to hatred entertained against other rival tribes.

I found the little town of Georgiefsk so lively and bustling, that I was induced to remain there a short time, especially as it contained a large market, presenting a surprising variety of costumes and faces, including representatives of all the races inhabiting the neighbouring districts. Though the Crimean market of Simpheropol is frequented by a much larger crowd of people, its elements are not so varied, and hence not so entertaining

as those encountered at Georgiefsk. The majority of the frequenters of the latter market consist of Kabardans, Nogays and Russians, and there was also a sprinkling of gipsies, Elbrus Tartars, Circassians and Armenians. The Kabardans have noble and slender figures, aquiline noses, and darker complexions than the Circassians, whom I saw at Ekaterinodar. Their pronunciation of the Adighè idiom appeared to me distincter and more melodious, and on hearing them speak, it is easier to retain some of the words. There is no difference between their dress and that of the Circassians; their arms are also similar, and they have cast aside, since half a century, their cuirasses, bows and arrows, which have also been discarded by the mountaineers of the Caucasus. Nor is it an easy matter to obtain these articles for money, as they are only kept as curiosities by a few families of Usdens.

The Nogays who were present at the market, had the genuine Mogul type, small, sparkling eyes, and projecting cheek-bones, exactly resembling those of the Calmucks. An old fellow, of at least eighty years of age, with a snow white beard, looked precisely like a satyr,

and his physiognomy appeared to me even uglier and more brutish than the frightful and sensual Soudan negroes in Algeria. Compared with a race so fundamentally ugly, the beauty of the Circassian type, and the handsome Elbrus Tartars of the Karatschai tribe, formed an extreme contrast. Nevertheless, I did not remark among the hundreds of Kabardans and mountaineers present, any form or carriage so distinguished or heroic as those of the Circassian chief Chora Beg, at Ekaterinodar. But it is easy to perceive, amongst the mixture of tribes at the Georgiesk market, that as regards muscular development, breadth of chest and strength of frame, the Cossacks surpass all the Mohammedan tribes of the steppes, and of the mountains.

We continually noticed in these steppes, solitary mohills, *i.e.*, rude conical mounds, which are ascribed to the Moguls, and probably extend from the shores of the Euxine to the Caspian Sea. In other respects, the journey presented little interest. The mists and clouds concealed the Caucasus, which we were now rapidly approaching. Fatigued, and not in the best humour, we at length arrived at Ekateri-

nograd, the chief town of the Cossacks of the Line, situated on the left bank of the Terek, equalling Ekaterinodar in size, but inferior to the Tschernomorski capital in interest, because it presents fewer opportunities of visits from the Circassians.

Some hours before my arrival at Ekaterinograd, a Cossack had galloped in, announcing the approach of Lieutenant-General Gurko, brother of the Commander-in-chief at Stavropol, who was travelling to Tiflis, and required relays of horses for himself and suite along the road. The Russian post-master, accordingly, refused to furnish any horses to other passengers, although the General was not expected until three days later. In order to preserve his person from the rudeness or ill-treatment of the Russian travellers, who were all very savage at the delay, the post-master stuck his Stanislaus order in the button-hole of his laced coat. This decoration protected him effectually from boxes on the ear, and a sound thrashing, to which Russian post-masters are frequently exposed, but not from the curses of the impatient travellers. I endured this delay patiently, in the hope of having better weather for our

journey. We feasted on delicate pheasants, which are here to be had for a trifling sum, washed down with bad Georgian wine, and then we stretched ourselves on our hard straw beds.

When I awoke the next morning, the bright sun (which was quite a novelty) shone in through the crevices of the wall, and my servant, who had gone out before me, suddenly entered my chamber with the welcome tidings, that the Caucasus was to be seen in unclouded beauty. I hurried out immediately, and before me was presented such an exquisite landscape, that I shall never forget it to the day of judgment. The mist, which had so long enveloped the Caucasus, was all dispelled, and a bright clear atmosphere reigned over steppe and mountain. I now heartily rejoiced at the gloomy weather of the last few days, as the surprise was all the greater, the effect of the indescribable grandeur of the whole scene all the more powerful, since the curtain had risen so suddenly. The icy Caucasian giants stood out in an endless chain, forming the background of the steppe. They appeared very near, although their real distance was several days' journey. They rose up over

the dark wooded foreground of the mountain in the most eccentric shapes, resembling teeth, pillars, horns, cupolas, and pyramids. Neither the Swiss Alps, the Taurus, the Atlas, the Balkan, the Appenine, or any of the well-known mountains of Europe, have such furrowed and broken, rocky and snowy precipices, or such bold peaks as the giants of the main chain of the Caucasus. The Orientals have rightly named the Caucasus, "the thousand pointed." Amongst the mountainous countries through which I have travelled in three hemispheres, I am not acquainted with any spot so favourably placed to give you an extensive view over an entire highland region, as the Terek steppe, near Georgiefsk. The traveller stands here at an almost equal distance from both the extremities of the Caucasus on the Black and Caspian Seas. Let the reader imagine an almost entirely level steppe, but slightly elevated above the surface of the sea, and only very thinly sprinkled with trees. In the background of this naked plain, rise up suddenly and almost without a break, a chain of giant mountains, four hundred miles in length, whose average height above the Terek steppe, amounts to from ten to twelve thousand

feet. I much doubt whether there is any spot on the earth more favourably situated for taking in at a glance, chains of mountains of such extent and size. Viewed from the plains, and at a little distance, the Caucasus surpasses the European Alps in picturesque beauty, but in the interior, owing to its want of lakes and large waterfalls, and its scarcity of glaciers, it does not bear comparison with Switzerland and the Tyrol.

The Elbrus, to the south-west, presents itself as seen from Georgiefsk, in a perfectly conical form with truncated summits, and clothed from head to foot in a mantle of snow. According to the barometrical measurement of the academicians who accompanied the expedition of General Emanuel, its elevation amounts to 15,420 French feet, and it forms the centre of an amphitheatre of craters. Although no mountains, in its immediate neighbourhood, rival it in elevation, (the mountains Anal, Kindschal, and Bermamuck, which surround it in the form of a half circle, are from 4000 to 5000 feet lower), yet the Elbrus appears to the eye less elevated, and less magnificent than the Kasbek, to the southward, which, according to the measurement of Mcyer, is about the height

of Mont Blanc. The Kasbek, whose summit resembles the hump of a camel, is surrounded by mighty giants, but distinctly overtops them all.

Ekaterinograd is a common Cossack town, regularly built with streets at right angles consisting of rather poor little houses, and contains nothing very remarkable. The Terek which flows at some distance from the walls, is not so broad and deep here as the Kouban at Ekaterinodar. I walked for some hours along its banks, in search of pheasants, but found none, although some Cossack sportsmen, even unattended by dogs, returned with plenty of game, which is so cheap, that I bought a brace of pheasants for one and a half paper roubles. A Russian officer can obtain them for half the money, and these birds are so abundant, that the Cossacks put the finest pheasants in their pot, or roast them for their family board.

Whilst we were feasting on this dainty fare, in the little Cossack house, a most unfortunate piece of news arrived, and set the whole community in a ferment. A swarm of mounted Tschetschensians had laid waste the country surrounding Mosdok, had ventured into the

very streets of the town, cut down unarmed men, and carried off prisoners. Mosdok is situated* not many versts east of Ekaterinograd. No such specimen of daring on the part of the warriors of Schamyl had been experienced for six months ; and the Russian staff officers made grave faces, when they considered how slight was the protection afforded by the fortresses, against so bold and active an enemy.

General Gurko would not come, but the decorated post-master remained inexorable, and resisted all bribes. At last, I determined to hire three Cossack horses to take me to Vladenkaukas, although the journey, conducted in this manner, was very tedious. The first day, we enjoyed the view of the Caucasus chain till nightfall. In the stanitza of Alexandroff, where we took up our quarters for the night, I saw the sun set magnificently behind the Elbrus. The giant summit of this mighty mountain was resplendent with a ruby tint. When the sun had already set, and the Elbrus had become dim and scarcely visible, a light mist, tinged with the reflection of the sun-

* Mosdok stands on the Terek, thirty-four versts from Ekaterinograd.

set blush, stole round the other snowy giants which surround the Kasbek, the summit itself of the Kasbek retaining the illumination longest.

On the second day, the heavens were clouded, the mountains disappeared, and towards evening we had a thick, drifting snow, and a rough steppe wind. My carriage was escorted to Vladekaukas by only a few Don and Oural Cossacks. It was not possible to procure a large number of men, for at every post-house they were obliged to keep twenty-five troopers in readiness for Lieutenant-General Gurko's escort.

At length, this great man, whom the Emperor had appointed Civil Governor in Trans-Caucasia, arrived, and we spent the evening together in the stanitza of Nikolajefsk. I paid my visit to the General, gave him my papers, and at the same time told him that I had brought a letter from Count Woronzoff for his brother at Stavropol. All this made no impression on the General, who, though tolerably good-natured, was regarded as a narrow-minded and rough man, and strongly resembled in countenance, deportment, and manners the cutler N—— at L——. When I had ex-

plained to him the scientific object of my Caucasian journey, a comic expression of extreme astonishment overspread his well-conditioned countenance. I asked the General to allow me to travel on under the protection of his escort, and I must admit that he promised me that I should enjoy this advantage; but he started the next day without waiting for my carriage, though my Cossack was only two minutes after time. Nevertheless, it would have been impossible for me to have kept pace with the General, as he travelled twice as fast as I could do, and changed horses very frequently.

On the third day after my departure from Ekaterinograd, we found ourselves in a very melancholy position. The road was covered with a deep bed of snow; our wearied horses could scarcely be urged forwards; a violent wind blew in our faces, and the Cossacks of the escort entreated us to hasten, because this country was notoriously dangerous. My coachman was a young Cossack of about fourteen years of age, who was in the most horrible alarm, and who thrashed the horses with all his strength, without being able to bring them to a trot. I consulted with my conductor what to

do, should a band of Tchetschensians show themselves on the Terek. We must naturally have cut the traces and fled ; for what could five men do against a hundred ?

I recited Pouschkin's Tschetschensian song, and repeated the last words in a loud voice, in order to increase the alarm of the Cossack boy : "Tschetschentz chodit sa räkoi," (the Tschetschensian goes by the river). On hearing this, the boy was terrified, and looked, full of anxiety, towards the white banks of the Terek ; but the thick snow-drift deprived the enemy of all desire of indulging in a plundering expedition into the steppe ; and we, at length, reached Vladikaukas with whole skins, and without having met one hostile Tschetschensian.

Vladikaukas, the strongest and most important stronghold of Russian Cis-Caucasia, is situated at the foot of the Caucasian outlyers, in a plain, on both banks of the Terek, and commands the entrance of the mountain pass which leads from here through the ravines and narrow defiles of the Terek, to Georgia. The neighbouring mountains are finely wooded, especially on the eastern side, where, however, it is dangerous to take a walk, and where no

Russian wood-cutter would dare to go without a strong military escort. In Vladikaukas there is a very respectable inn, kept by a Pole, containing a billiard-table, and a numerous society of Russian officers. The garrison consists of several regiments, at that time under the command of General Baldinin, a brave and jovial man, whom the soldiers loved as a father.

On the day of my arrival, there was a great military review, and hundreds of the neighbouring mountaineers had come down to behold the sight. The greater part of these Caucasians consisted of Ossetians, Tschetschensians, and Ingusches. As I should not readily find other opportunities of observing so many individuals of these races, inhabiting the north side of the Caucasus, I determined to remain some few days at Vladikaukas.

CHAPTER VII.

Stay at Vladikaukas—Indifferent Success of the Russians on the North Side of the Mountains—An Ossetian Physician—The Ingusches—A Military Review—A Polish Jew as Prisoner of Schamyl—Journey across the Caucasus—Its Natural Features—The Kreuzberg—Detention at Ananur—Arrival at Tiflis.

“VLADIKAUKAS is still, as it used to be, a very important and useful military centre, where every one seeks refuge after escaping from the ambuscades of the Circassians and Kabardons in the neighbourhood. The old barbarous mode of life still prevails among the natives, so that even the smallest excursion is attended with danger, and on that account forbidden.” Nineteen years ago, Perrot wrote the previous remarks during his second journey through the Caucasus, and they are still in great a measure applicable to

the present time. The road from Ekaterinograd to Vladikaukas, is still considered very unsafe, and no Russian soldier would venture alone, out of range, beyond the wall of the fortress, in the direction of the mountains. Those who know the importance which all the Russian leaders attach to this stronghold, on account of its situation commanding the great pass to Georgia; those who recollect reading in the various narratives of travels, that important masses of troops are always concentrated there, that every means are used by the Russians by steel and gold, either to subdue, or to win over the neighbouring tribes, and those who compare the mightiest endeavours with the small results which Russia has obtained after more than fifty years occupation of these head-quarters of the Caucasus, will not lose confidence in the determined resistance of the mountaineers, nor pronounce, like Neumann, those persons to be "dreamers," who assert that the war in the Caucasus will continue, and that the freedom of the Daghestan and Tschetschensian tribes will be preserved for more than a century.

During my residence in this stronghold, the scene appeared as animated and warlike as at any former period. In the inn, kept by my

Polish host, I met a number of Russian military men, and the threatening aspect of things was the general talk of the day.

Within the fortress at Vladikaukas, the Russians are perfectly secure from all attacks, the garrison being always numerous. Surrounding this place, is a small neutral territory, occupied by Ossetians, Kabardans and Ingusches, who side partly with the Russians, and partly with Schamyl. A league further in the mountains, begin the dwellings of the free tribes. Any Russians who ventured among them, would be retained as prisoners, or sold as slaves in the interior of Tschetschina. The Russian wood-cutters dare not venture even in the woods which cover the neighbouring hills to the east and south of Vladikaukas, without the escort of a strong detachment, and even then they are in continual fear of an attack. A mountain war against an inflexible, fanatical and freedom loving people, is attended with difficulties, which baffle the most learned combinations of European tacticians, and the Russians with all their immense hordes, their inexhaustible resources, their firmness and bravery, are not much nearer the subjugation

of the Caucasus, than the Tartars, the Turks, and the Persians were before them. We do not imply by this, that the Tschetschensians, by means of Schamyl or his successors, will be ever destined, or will ever be able to preserve Asia from a Russian invasion. The great Caucasian road, so wonderfully laid down by nature, and commanded by the fortresses of Vladikaukas and Dariel, has never yet been blocked up, either by Schamyl or his predecessors, Shasi Mullah and Scheik Mansur, and so long as they cannot effect this, no power in the world is able to protect the whole of central Asia from a Russian invasion, if at any time an ambitious Emperor should occupy the Russian throne.

The eastern Caucasians are inferior to the genuine Circassians, in physical development; even the Kabardans here are less handsome than their clansmen on the Kouban and the Black Sea. A tall, lean man, with a coal-black beard, an aquiline nose, an earnest expression, and intelligent eyes, pleased me the most amongst all the natives present. I took him, (for he was splendidly equipped,) to be an eminent chieftain, and was not a little

surprised, when Colonel Nestoroff, the commandant, introduced the imposing Caucasian to me as an Ossetian physician. He was not only celebrated as a medical man amongst his countrymen in the mountains, but had also a considerable practice amongst the Russians, and the regimental doctors were not a little jealous of their barbarous colleague. He had at this time under his care, a Russian lieutenant-colonel, whose fractured arm none of the Russian surgeons had been able to cure, with all their ointments and bandages, whilst the curative system of the Ossetian, which consisted of vegetable fomentations, produced immediately a good effect. The invalid officer* repeatedly assured me that the other mountaineers present were chiefly Ingusches, of the so-called neutral tribes. The Ingusches speak, like the Tschetschensians, a dialect of the Mizdschegsch language, and appear to have the same origin as the latter warlike people, but they do not enjoy an equal re-

* Some months after I met the Lieutenant-Colonel again in Tiflis. He still wore his arm in a sling; and the tone of exaggerated praise in which he spoke of the Ossetian physician, at Vladikaukas, was greatly altered.

putation for bravery, and Schamyl can depend less on them, than on any other of the mountain tribes of the Eastern Caucasus. Only a small number of the Ingusches appear to acknowledge the Mohammedan belief, and they are not so fanatical as the Lesghians and Tschetschensians. Like the Ossetians, their neighbours, the Ingusches appear to be indifferent with regard to their religion, although they practice some secret religious ceremonies. Klaproth, who remained some time in their neighbourhood, maintains that the Ingusches, whom he calls a "free and independent people," have a peculiar religion, and are equally averse to Christianity and Islamism. Their god is called "Dale." Their priest is always an old man of upright life, whom they name "Zanin stag," which means "a pure man," and who kills the victims for sacrifice. Sometimes, the Ingusches make pilgrimages to the ruins of the Christian churches existing in their mountains, which, like all the Christian ruins in the Caucasus, whose origin is buried in obscurity, are ascribed to the Georgian Queen Thamar. The Ingusches frequently borrow their names from animals; some are called

dog (Pon), others, pig (Hoka), and the women have still more singular names, for instance, "Assir Wachara," (who rides a calf,) "Assiali wachara," (who rides a cow). If an Ingusch loses a son, another who has lost a daughter comes to him, and says: "Thy son will require a wife in the other world; I will give him my daughter; give me the price of the bride." Such a proposal is never rejected, even should the price of the bride be thirty cows.

The mountaineers, some hundreds of whom, came daily to visit Vladikaukas, appeared to be much interested in a great military review which I witnessed. Their eagle eyes were steadily directed towards the lines of muskets in the Russian ranks. The regular movement of thousands at one word of command, the united rattle of weapons as they clashed with one stroke in performing the exercise, the marches, the evolutions, the flourish of trumpets, and the band, presented features which fixed their attention in the highest possible degree. The exercise was fatiguing, as it lasted a long time; the air was cold, snow lay on the ground, and during the examination of the soldiers'

knapsacks, the men were obliged to lie down on the snow.

I was particularly interested in comparing the broad-shouldered, snub-nosed Russians, with the slender Circassians, with their noble aquiline profile, as they stood together, in dense masses, near me. In the countenances of the former, appeared a uniform expression of patience and brutish obedience, every trace of spontaneous thought being entirely drilled out of them. On the other hand, I beheld a fearless demeanour, a haughty expression of countenance, each individual feeling himself a man, and being a thorough hero. What could those Ingusches think of this spectacle? If closely pressed with obtrusive questions, they would scarcely have confessed their inmost thoughts, and it was necessary to guess them through the expression of their countenances. Perhaps I may be mistaken, but I thought that I read nothing favourable to the Russian system in them. Those faces full of pride, hatred, and contempt, seemed to say, "Look at them, those drivelling slaves, who would make us bend our necks beneath the yoke of their master—is not their lot the most miserable? Let us thank God that we

do not, as yet, share their fate, and let us fight on to the utmost, rather than become slaves as they are."

A special house, with a suite of small furnished rooms, has been established for the officers and strangers travelling to Vladikaukas. Among the soldiers who are stationed here, for the escort of travellers, I met a Polish Jew who spoke German. My acquaintance with this man, whose origin could be divined at first sight, was of the greatest interest to me, as he had lived in captivity for three years in the interior of Great Tschetchina, as slave of the Murad chief, Achwerdi Mahoma; he had often seen Schamyl, and was able to give me much information respecting the state of affairs in the interior, Schamyl's personal peculiarities, and the manners of the Murids and mode of life of the Eastern tribes. Unfortunately, this Jew had not the gift of observation to any great degree, and his intelligence consisted exclusively in a sort of cunning, and the art of dissimulation which had eventually rescued him from slavery. Of the Caucasians he spoke unfavourably. During the first part of his captivity, especially when he did not understand much of their

language, he suffered very severely ; he was obliged to labour hard, endured hunger, and was so often punished with blows, that he thought himself almost fortunate to be again amongst the Russians.

As a married soldier, he found himself here less unfortunate than most of the other privates, for the pretty face of his young wife, gained him the protection of some staff officers, and the musketeer Isaac, was happily not of a very jealous disposition. In order to assist his memory, and make his tongue somewhat voluble, I treated the Jew to a couple of glasses of excellent arrack. This made him decidedly more communicative. The particulars which I learned from him respecting the condition of the enemy's country, and especially of its energetic chief, I shall reserve for a subsequent part of this work. Thus much must be evident to all who have had intercourse with people who have seen Schamyl with their own eyes : that we must not regard this bold leader as a noble hero of the stamp of the Arab Saladin, or the Scotch Rob Roy. He shares with Abd-el-Kader, fanaticism, a warlike spirit, priestly eloquence, and an exact knowledge of his people, firmness,

and the talent of a partisan leader, without the natural mildness, deep spiritual piety, and priestly cultivation of the Marabout; also, without having those impulses of magnanimity and generosity, which the Arab chief has shown in many cases. It is a remarkable fact, that both exercise the same denial in reference to sexual instinct. Schamyl, like Abd-el-Kader has only one wife, whom he seldom visits, and from whom he lives separate for months together.* This characteristic will appear especially remarkable to those who know that chastity is one of the rarest qualities of Orientals.

As far as the station of Lars, I made use of Colonel Nestoroff's written order for escorts. Proceeding thence, we travelled over the main chain of mountains in two carriages, and without any escort. The entrance into this celebrated Caucasian pass, which begins about a couple of versts south of Vladikaukas, affords a rich entertainment to the lover of romantic scenery. The rocky declivities enclosing the

* This is opposed to Bodenstedt's opinion, who says, that Schamyl has three wives. I believe, however, that Mr. Bodenstedt has been incorrect in this, as well as in many other respects.—*Author.*

pass are generally steep, frequently precipitous, rising in the form of terraces, in many cases presenting a jagged outline, and always displaying picturesque and diversified forms on the side of the pass. Trees decorated with beautiful foliage, though at this season leafless, adorn the declivities, yet the woods become continually thinner the higher you ascend, and when they disappear, the rocks lose their most beautiful ornament, without finding a compensation even in the more majestic forms of the mountains in the main chain.

The rocky scenery of the Caucasian pass is relieved and improved by the abundance of copious streams. Springs and rivulets rush merrily over the magnificent granite precipices, and form numerous cascades, which are inferior, however, to the Swiss waterfalls. The Terek, which is, even here, a stream of respectable size, rushes through the pass in its turbulent course, and leaps, wildly thundering down some small falls of inconsiderable height; indeed, during the month of June, the river occupies the entire breadth of the pass, destroys the bridges, and, in a short time, interrupts all intercourse. The Cossacks alone, with their excellent horses,

manage to effect a passage, and the postal communication between Trans-Caucasia and Russia is never entirely interrupted. The magnificence of the view which greets the traveller at the entrance of the pass, was, on the first day, heightened, rather than diminished, by the misty atmosphere.

My companion, a young dragoon officer, and myself, were so enchanted with it, that we could no longer remain in the carriage, and we ordered the two Cossacks, who escorted us, to dismount and take our places, with the promise of a larger *douceur*, in the event of their being called to account for it. Seizing their lances, we vaulted into the saddles of their long-haired steeds, and rode away in front, or drew up behind the carriage, according to the peculiar attractions afforded by the individual features of the scenery. In case the Caucasians had attacked us, it is doubtful if we should have imposed on them as much as genuine Cossacks, but, fortunately, the Tschetschensians did not show themselves.

The trees at Lars are both thinly scattered and small in size, and the traveller has to pay dear for fuel. We passed the night here,

visited the old castellated ruins in the neighbourhood, whose origin is unknown, and chatted in the evening over the tea-table with the drunken post-master, who spoke a little German, and described the difficulties of the way over the Kreuzberg in dismal colours. Some days afterwards, we travelled on without any escort. The danger of an attack is greatest in the steppe, and in the mountain passes. It diminishes as you climb higher up the pass, and in the main chain of the Caucasus, you travel as safely as in Georgia. Owing to the extreme steepness of the declivities of the pass, the boldest robbers of the Caucasus would not readily venture into the defile to lie in wait for travellers, for their return with their booty over the almost perpendicular rocks, would be a very difficult matter to accomplish. The neighbourhood of the Kasbek, where the traveller enters the central chain, and where the pass widens considerably, is not inhabited by Tschetschenians or Ingusches, but chiefly by Ossetians, nominal Christians, mixed with a few Georgians. These Christian Ossetians have similar weapons, and dress like the other Caucasians. They are quite as faithless, and as eager after

the property of strangers, but do not possess the energy, the religious fanaticism, the proud independence, and the warlike spirit of the Mohammedan tribes of the Caucasus. They fear the Russians, and those of their chiefs who are in the Russian pay, keep on good terms with their masters, through fear, and personal interest. Since the Russian government lays the greatest stress on securing the connection between Cis- and Trans-Caucasia, robberies on the part of the Ossetians would draw down the heaviest punishment on them at the hands of the Muscofs, and the inhabitants of the higher mountains are not protected, like the people of the lower chains, against the attacks of the Russian columns, by impenetrable woods or inaccessible rocky defiles.

The rocky forms of the central chain, notwithstanding their greater altitude, are not so ruggedly wild, so jagged, or so picturesque as in the subordinate chain. Sir Robert Ker Porter, a noted British traveller, who made the same journey over Kasbek, speaks of the beauty of the scenery in extravagant terms, and thinks that no other mountains he has seen can be compared with the Caucasus in magnitude

and picturesque beauty. This opinion appears to me exaggerated. The Caucasus is deficient in lakes, like those of Switzerland, and no glaciers have been hitherto discovered equalling those of Chamouni in size, nor does it offer any waterfalls to be compared with those of the Aar and Staubbach.

As we advanced, the mighty Kasbek was enveloped in mist. The villages situated at its foot, on both banks of the Terek, are inhabited by Georgians, and a convent erected on its declivity is inhabited by Georgian monks. We took up our night quarters at Kobi, which is situated somewhat higher than the village of Kasbek. The miserable hamlet of Kobi is perched in the middle of an Alpine valley, which was covered with a considerable quantity of half-melted snow, notwithstanding the advanced season of the year. We whiled away the time till evening in shooting wild-fowl, but, to our vexation, found no new or rare species of birds.

The following day, we equipped ourselves for our journey over the Kreuzberg. Six horses were harnessed to my carriage, and yet we proceeded at a very slow pace, on account of

the steepness of the declivity, and of the masses of snow which, after being daily removed by a host of labourers, were continually renewed by fresh snow-drifts and avalanches. The road attains here the great elevation of 7534 feet; the quicksilver of the thermometer fell to 22°, and a cutting storm wind blew the snow-flakes in our faces. I reckon this day on the Caucasus as the most trying I ever experienced. Notwithstanding our fur cloaks, we were nearly frozen. About a mile from Keschaur, the snow was so deep on the edge of a precipice 2000 feet in depth, that the drivers almost despaired of advancing, and persuaded us to alight, and we waded up to our middle in snow, following the carriage, which was almost suspended over the frightful abyss at our side. I cannot conceive what would have happened if we had chanced to encounter another vehicle, as it was impossible to turn aside or to turn back, owing to the narrowness of the road.

At length, when we reached the miserable post-house at Keschaur, I felt extremely unwell, and I threw myself, quite exhausted, on my straw bed; but a profuse perspiration produced considerable relief, and I was able to join the

party at tea. A warm fire and steaming kettle gradually restored our good-humour, and we recovered our spirits, though we lamented that we had not made the sea-passage to Redout-Kaleh, and voted a spring journey over the Caucasus to the devil.

The southern declivity of the Kreuzberg, towards Pasanur is not so steep as the northern slope, but it is very arduous, and in winter somewhat dangerous. Nevertheless the skilful driving of our Russian postillion secured us from all serious accidents, though the axle of my carriage broke between Pasanur and Anamur, and this untoward circumstance condemned me to remain some days longer in this beautiful, but rather secluded spot. The inhabitants of Anamur are Georgians. They observe strict fasts, and there was considerable difficulty in obtaining food, because these bigoted people consider it sinful even to sell flesh during Lent. On offering twice its value, however, they were induced to sell us half a ham, but we were obliged to carve it with our own knives, as their tender consciences made them reluctant even to touch the forbidden food. The christianity of the Georgians is confined to strict fasts and mumbled orisons, for

we cannot commend them on the score of morals and commercial intercourse. Charity and benevolence seem, almost unknown to them, but to chew a piece of ham before Easter, is regarded as a damnable sin, which could not be atoned for by everlasting fire. The Oriental Christians perform the same follies during their fasts, as the Mohammedans during the Ramazan.

We proceeded on our journey, after a delay of a few days, passing through Duschet and Mizchet, to Tiflis, and arrived at this capital of Trans-Caucasia, at a favourable time of the summer.*

* The Pass of the Kreuzberg is called in Russian, "Krestowaja Gora," both names signifying "Mountain of the Cross."

CHAPTER VIII.

Residence at Kasbek—Natural History—Wanderings in the Mountains to the Regions of Eternal Snow—Details respecting the Sect of the Duchoborzi—Glaziers of the Kasbek—Excursions to Kobi—The Ossetians—Mineral Springs of the Caucasus—Caucasian and Swiss Scenery compared.

AFTER a three months' residence in Trans-Caucasia, I returned to the Caucasus, in order to spend the hottest part of the summer in the high Alps. Tiflis had become insupportable from dust and glare, and from the deficiency of drinkable water—the parched landscape had lost all its charm, and offered no longer any temptation to our rambling propensities. Upon the heights of the Caucasus, the sun's rays are mitigated by the cool glaciers, and the Alpine breezes, which sweep across them. Delicious

springs murmur in all directions, and just when the Kur valleys of Georgia are burnt up into deserts, the Alpine flora is in its greatest splendour. This summer sojourn in the Caucasus lives in my memory, as the most enjoyable period of all my wanderings in the east. The most favourable time for Natural History researches, and for rambling in all directions through the valleys and ravines of this high mountain region, is during the month of August. Appetite, sleep, frame of mind, were never in finer order than at this time.

The old Cossack and Stephen Nogell the Hungarian, had accompanied me as far as Kasbek. My servants were in the post-chaise, whilst I rode the Cossack horse to enjoy the views. On our arrival at the village of Kasbek, I sent the Hungarian to collect plants and insects on the north side of the mountain, near Vladikaukas. Though the specimens he brought back were not numerous, yet I felt convinced the flora, and more particularly the fauna of that side of the Caucasus, differ from those of the southern slope. During the absence of my companions, I made an excursion to the neigh-

bourhood of the Kasbek, and ascended this celebrated mountain as far as the lower boundary of eternal snow. Two Georgian youths, of thirteen or fourteen years old, accompanied me. They spoke a little Russian, and seemed very intelligent ; their honesty I cannot praise as highly. Opposite Kasbek, on the left bank of the Terek, stands a village of some importance called Kerget, it is built exactly on the slope of the declivity, the houses are constructed with terraces like those of the Ossetians. The inhabitants are a Georgian race, and speak that language—yet their dress and weapons are those of the Ossetians and Circassians. How these Georgians came to be intercalated amongst Ossetians and Ingusches is unknown. Overhanging the village, and about six hundred feet above the bed of the Terek, stands a Georgian monastery. Thus far is practicable on horseback, further up the road becomes difficult, and as the glaciers are approached, it becomes impossible to proceed, except on foot. The green and variegated region of the higher Alpine meadows is separated from the lower edge of the moraines by a broad and deep ravine at the bottom of which thunder mighty mountain torrents ; these moraines con-

sist of immense blocks of porphyritic rock ; a border of somewhat dirty ice skirted each glacier, which following the slope of the mountain from west to east, gradually approach, and then disappear into the depths of the ravine. After surmounting, not without much exertion and fatigue, the ravine and moraines, we pushed on across the ice until we reached the highest glacier. My two young Georgian guides, though strong and active climbers, here began to lose courage and to flag. They spoke of avalanches, robbers, and all kinds of dangers, and represented themselves as completely exhausted, although I am convinced they felt the fatigue less than I did.

I was obliged, therefore, to give way, as no inducement could prevail on them to go further. I ventured on alone to the top of the highest glacier. There, upon a height of nearly eleven thousand feet, I had an unimpeded view of the entire region of glaciers, of the verdant declivities and ravines, far below, covered with rich pasturage, and many tinted Alpine flowers, and of a portion of the higher valleys of the Caucasus, towards the north-east and west ; through which rush numerous mountain torrents. The glaciers of the Kasbek

are inferior to those of Mont Blanc, and of the Bernese Oberland in extent, in size, and in beauty ; it is only in the higher regions that the ice has the beautiful blue colour. When I compare the view from the Kasbek with that from the hut of Messrs. Agassiz and Dolfuss, overlooking the Aar glacier, where the huge aiguilles of Finsteraarhorn, Schreckhorn, Wetterhorn and the neighbouring giants advance their icy masses threateningly towards the Grimsel, I cannot but admit, that for grandeur, variety, and picturesque beauty, Switzerland must have the preference, although few of the Swiss mountains equal the Kasbek in bulk or elevation. Nor does the Elbrus, with its regular cone-shaped form, or the lofty mountains in its vicinity, offer any view at all comparable to that of the Jungfrau from Interlachen. It is true, that all the glaciers of the Caucasus have not been visited by Europeans ; for instance, we have no description of the mountain land of the Suani, in the Western Caucasus, which must be particularly picturesque, and rich in glaciers. Also, the country of the Ubiches, which no European traveller has yet explored, must have its glaciers.

When I returned to the village on the evening of August 2nd, tired out with my wanderings amongst the glaciers, I found everything in an extraordinary state of confusion. Hundreds of heavily-laden vehicles were rolling slowly through the village ; old men with patriarchal beards, little children, women, with infants in their arms, were seated in them, surrounded by their household, and farming goods, and chattels. These poor emigrants took me suddenly back into Europe. I could have imagined myself at Havre or Bremen ; the costume of the men reminded me of that of the Wurtemburger peasant, but the narrow-brimmed shabby hat, and still more, the long beard, bespoke the Russian. They were, in fact, emigrants from Southern Russia, forced by a ukase of the Emperor to leave their beautiful and fruitful home, on the borders of the sea of Azoff, to settle in the barren deserts of the cold mountain region beyond Achalzich and Gumri, on the other side of the Caucasus, and at the extreme boundary of the Russian Empire. As I had often heard of this tribe, during my stay in the Crimea, I examined them with much interest

whilst they passed through the village, which they continued to do for a couple of days.

Some of the old men of seventy or eighty had a most venerable, almost apostolic appearance, and were so remarkably alike, they resembled so many twin brothers. The women and young girls were rarely pretty ; they wore a frightful head-dress, fastened in front by a broad band, and a jacket, generally blue, hung down over the hips, such as Russian serfs usually wear. The children, and particularly the boys, had a gentle, good-tempered expression of countenance. The whole tribe seemed like one large family. Sometimes ten or more waggons would halt, and the men dismount and congregate round some old woman, who, from a huge bottle of schnaps, would distribute a glass to each, and finish by a bumper to herself.

It was easy to see, by their uniform simplicity of dress, their thoughtful expression of face, and their patriarchial communism, that they belonged to one of the reformed sects, and they reminded me of the German Separatists in Georgia. The sight of so many

men wandering forth with resolute and earnest resignation, affected me deeply.

I knew the melancholy lot which awaited them, as I had staid some time at Gumri, and had become acquainted with the Duchoborzi already settled there. They lived in a state of the greatest want and wretchedness; ill-used and plundered by Russian functionaries—many families perished from starvation and misery.

The Duchoborzi were settled, by command of the Emperor Alexander, in the steppes near the Sea of Azoff, as he feared the spread of their religious opinions, should they remain in the interior of the empire. They formed eleven beautiful and flourishing villages on the banks of the Maloschna (Milk River,) in the neighbourhood of the Nogay Tartars, German Moravians, and Malokanians. In no part of the Russian empire was agriculture, horticulture, and the breeding of cattle so flourishing as amongst the religious sects of the Maloschna and Duchoborzi. They grew rich, but kept themselves mistrustfully apart from their neighbours, and permitted no strangers to be present during the performance of the mysteries of their religion—what these were, I have never

heard. The Duchoborzi assemble daily in their churches and sing psalms. They believe that the Holy Ghost, the Father, or the Son dwell in man, but they appear to have no clear conception of the meaning of their religious forms. They listen with the greatest attention to the complicated and fanatical discourses of their elders, and believe that their chief priest holds direct intercourse with the Godhead. He exercises a secret and unbounded influence, before which all tremble. The Russian scholar, Köppen, dwelt some time amongst them, and, no doubt, learnt much about their institutions and secret religious services, but he was forbidden, by his government, to reveal any of the observations he had made.

As long as the Emperor Alexander lived, the Duchoborzi were left in peace. They paid their taxes regularly, furnished recruits, and submitted in everything to their duties as subjects. Social intercourse with the Russians of the national religion was forbidden; but beyond this they were not aggrieved. On the accession of Nicholas to the Imperial throne, their condition underwent a material change. His wish to restore the unity of the Russian church, was

known, and his consequent dislike of Sectarianism. This was sufficient to excite the priests and functionaries in the vicinity of the Duchoborzi to a series of persecutions against these unfortunates. They were accused of sheltering escaped criminals within their villages, and of burying their dead without making any report in the official registers. It was also said, that persons suspected of revealing any of their ceremonies, were tried secretly, and never more heard of. Upon these vague reports, a commission of enquiry was set on foot, and the threat of exile to Siberia or Trans-Caucasia filled the pocket of many a hungry official. Impartial men, however, maintain that the suspicion of the Duchoborzi affording shelter to deserters, is not unfounded, as the following circumstance, if reliable, will prove. A Russian Isprawnik (police-officer), had traced one of these fugitives to a Duchoborzi village. This being found out by the inhabitants, they murdered the man to avoid detection, and threw the body into a mill-stream, belonging to a German colony, with the intention of casting suspicion upon the colonists. These facts, though never clearly proved against them, were the ostensible reasons

for drawing down upon Sectarians, a general persecution ; more than a hundred were imprisoned, scourged, and tortured, though they gave certain proofs of their innocence.

Soon after this, an imperial ukase sent them all forth as exiles to the most sterile and melancholy part of Trans-Caucasia, at the utmost limits of the empire, where grain only ripens in the hottest summer, and they have to depend almost entirely on the breeding of cattle, as a means of sustenance. I was staying in Arpa-tschai, in 1843. Several thousand of the Duchoborzi were already settled there. They formed seven villages ; but all the people were in the most wretched condition : the children looked pale, and wasted from the bad quality, and insufficiency of the food. I asked one boy if he would come with me as my servant, and have plenty of food and good clothes to wear. He replied that he would like it very much, if he could take his Maminka (little mother) with him.

Notwithstanding the dreadful misery of these first settlers, which destroyed so many of them, the remainder of the Duchoborzi, to the number of from 4000 to 5000, were unpitifully driven

from their beautiful and prosperous settlements, on the Milk River, to share the fate of the former. They had to sell nearly all they possessed for anything they could get, and then, with patient submission, to set out in their long and melancholy journey over the Caucasus. They had been given the choice of remaining on the banks of the Maloschna, and of denying their faith for that of the Greek church ; but few did so. It is remarkable that a religion, with so vague an idea of the Deity, and of another world, should have enabled them to resist all temporal welfare, and to exchange their comfortable houses for a miserable banishment, rather than accept the creed of the Mother Church they had forsaken.

It is affirmed by those well acquainted with the present state of things in Russia, that the number of schismatics, who practise their religion in secret, is very great.

Some Russians of eminence remarked to the Marquis de Custine, that, although the government kept the existence of these sects as secret as possible, and used very stringent measures to suppress them, yet they seemed ineradicable. It was even whispered to M. de Custine, that these sects might eventually become

dangerous to the government. "C'est par des divisions religieuses que périra l'empire Russe." It is also the opinion of a celebrated German diplomatist, that the first symptoms of danger to Russia, powerful and united as she apparently seems, will most probably arise within the heart of the empire from religious opposition. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the home politics of Russia to judge of this important subject. It may be advanced, however, in opposition to these views, that these sects appear to have no political tendencies, and that the Emperor has not more faithful or devoted subjects, than they who venture to differ from him in creed. For instance, the Cossacks of the Line, who belong to a particular sect, are said to be amongst the bravest and most serviceable troops of the Russian army. None of the Duchoborzi, or Malokanians, with whom I have had any intercourse, have ever complained of the Emperor; they have invariably expressed their deep reverence for him personally. An old man of the Duchoborzi said to me in conversation: "The Emperor is not to blame for our misfortunes. He is a good and gracious Lord; but the priests and officials have spoken ill of us to him.

He knows us not. God bless Nicholas Paulowitch!"

Such fidelity on the part of persecuted, ill-used, and exiled men, made me shudder even more than it affected me. It reminded me of that Russian boyar, who, suffering during a whole day the tortures of the rack, to which Ivan, the Terrible, had sentenced him, perseveringly exclaimed between every sigh of agony : "Lord God, bless tyrants."

During the two days the Duchoborzi were passing through the village of Kasbek, I also remained there. The sight of these emigants had such an effect upon me, that I neglected my scientific excursions up the mountains. The resolute character, the calm submissiveness of this people pleased me. They were grave, yet not dejected ; both women and men were equally active, when there was anything to arrange or repack ; and many of the waggons were skilfully charioeered by the older women, who displayed also great activity in keeping their small droves of cattle together. The miserable booths of Kasbek offered little beyond white bread and nuts, which the young Duchoborzi took from us with *naïve* readiness without a word in reply.

The fathers thanked us by a nod, and a kind look ; whilst the women cried from the waggons, with remarkably sweet voices. “ Pakorno blagadarju, Gospodin”—Many thanks, Sir.

When the march of the Duchoborzi through the village was over, we betook ourselves again to our wanderings in the mountains. Though we were at the foot of the Kasbek, only the most easterly of its camel’s-hump-shaped summits was visible, nor is it on this side seen to such advantage as on the Karbardan steppes, or from the mountains of Georgia. Like Ararat, this Caucasian colossus loses in majesty when viewed immediately from its base. The Kasbek is totally deficient in that border of forest which gives to the Jungfrau so beautiful an effect, as seen from Lauterbrunnen. A few stunted aspens were the only trees I saw in this neighbourhood, and on the higher slopes the birch willows and aspen scarcely exceed the growth of shrubs. I cannot sufficiently account for the dwarfishness of these trees, as neither the degree of cold in winter, nor the elevation above the sea, are such as to occasion it.

Russian travellers had often told us of fearful avalanches of stone, which, every five or six

years, fall from the Kasbek into the valley of the Terek, and which, for months together, block up the roads, and fill up the bed of the river, thus preventing any intercourse along them, between Tiflis and Southern Russia. These stone avalanches are the accumulated piles of several moraines, which gradually slide down from the glaciers in an easterly direction. On my second visit to the Kasbek, I saw one of these vast accumulations of moraines, which had attained an almost incredible height ; its constantly increasing mass was gradually nearing the precipitous edge of the mountain, where, upon losing its equilibrium, it would fall with destructive force into the valley beneath. The inhabitants anticipated that this would shortly occur, and told me it would take many months to disencumber the roads of the *débris*, and bring back the Terek into its proper bed.

The last evening of my stay in the village of Kasbek, I spent most agreeably with several Russian officers from the seat of war at Daghestan ; the next day, I set out on my return to Kobi, where I took up my quarters for the third time. We were lodged in the worst room in the post-house, and even this wretched

accommodation was often disputed by newcomers.

The neighbourhood of Kobi is inhabited by the tribe of Ossetians. From their language, they are supposed to be of Medo-Persian origin. They live in aouls (villages), which have a solid square tower in the midst, surrounded by their dwellings, built of stone, and these rarely exceed about thirty in number. As the different tribes of the Caucasus are constantly in feud with each other, these towers or strongholds serve as retreats, into which the inhabitants retire for shelter and defence. The Ossetians have been subdued by the Russians, and are under the administration of a Natschalnik (district officer), by birth a Georgian. He resides in a country-house between Ketschaur and Pasanur. The Russians very wisely try to conciliate these turbulent mountain tribes, whose evident dislike to the Russian yoke they seek to overcome rather by persuasion and compliancy than by force.

It is extremely necessary for a stranger to have a "Konak," or protector, to secure himself, during his wanderings amongst the Moslem as well as the Christian tribes of the Caucasus,

from injury or death at their hands. Such a Konak offered himself to me on my first visit to an Ossetian village ; but less from disinterested motives than the expectation of all kinds of gifts in exchange for his proffered friendship. The Ossetians, like the other tribes of the Caucasus, are covetous of gain. My Ossetian friend knew enough Russian to enable us to understand each other, and he spoke largely of the importance of a Konak.

"No Ossetian," said he, "will dare injure a hair of your head, knowing he will have me for an enemy, and should any misfortune happen to you, my kinschal will not rest in its sheath until it is revenged."

As I had no great faith in his officiousness, I told him that I also carried a kinschal to defend myself, and that my gun was my best protector. However, as often as I made my appearance in the neighbourhood of his aoul, my importunate Konak, with every sign of the truest satisfaction, would follow me up the mountains wherever I went. He called me "Prad," (brother), and confessed he never had loved any one before half as well ; he begged me also to dispose of all he possessed, and promised to

bring me milk, butter, and cheese to Kobi. He did bring a can of sour milk, which Stephan Nogell said would be scarcely given to pigs in Hungary. My Ossetian friend, with further assurances of friendship, disclaimed all wish of kopecks for the milk. The conversation which followed is worthy of being verbally copied from my diary.

“ Brother,” said the Ossetian, “ I love thee as the apple of my eye. The milk I bring thee is from my favourite cow, and will be relished by thee; it costs nothing—it is a gift of love; but hast thou not a pair of old boots for me? the road to our aoul is stony and rough, and I am foot-sore.”

I gave him a pair, which did not quite fit him; he took them, but espying a pair of new shoes in the corner of the room, he continued:

“ These boots I shall keep in remembrance of thee—as often as I look upon them, I shall think of thee; but there lie good shoes, which will fit me, and make me happy. Give them to me, brother, and all I possess is thine.”

I replied, that I could not part with the shoes.

"Well," said my friend, "here is a beautiful knife—let me keep this in remembrance of thee, whom I love more than my brother. Drink of the milk—it is good, and allow me to take the knife?"

I nodded affirmatively, but with impatience, to show him I was tired of his importunity.

"The milk tastes good to thee," said the Ossetian, in the same insinuating tone; "I took it from my best cow, and thou shalt see her. But hast thou any powder? We will shoot *durra* for thee, and bring thee the choicest portions."

The Ossetian received several cartridges, and still persevered in his suit.

"At Tiflis there is excellent tobacco, which smells sweeter than our mountain flowers. Thou hast certainly brought some of this with thee, and wilt rejoice the heart of my old father, at home, with several pipes of it?"

I told my dear brother, that I was no smoker, and never carried any tobacco with me. The greedy eyes of the Caucasian swept over everything in the room, in order to make a further selection. I signed to the Hungarian to remove such articles as were lying about, to

spare my Konak any further temptation. The milk-can was, in the meanwhile, emptied, and the Ossetian began again his demands.

"The milk has tasted good to thee; I thought it would, for a beautiful cow, such as mine, is not to be found in the mountains. To-morrow I will bring thee more milk; it costs thee nothing. But hast thou not a glass of vodka? I am tired, and my home is far hence."

I allowed the Ossetian to be presented with a glass of schnaps, and, at the same time, had him shown the door. He took his leave, still protesting that he loved me as a brother, and that the milk did not cost me a single kopeck.

There are no mountains in Europe as rich in mineral springs as those of the Caucasus; about ten years ago, the celebrated baths of Pätiorsk on the north side of the mountains, came into note, and are visited by the St. Petersburgers, though the journey is both long and fatiguing. The ferruginous springs on the north side of the Kreuzberg, between Kobi and Keschaur, are not so well known, and are not used by invalids. I counted fifty of these copious springs; they

gushed forth in large jets, out of a deep basin, and form small cascades which fall over the precipices.

The varied and beautiful meteoric effects, so common in the Tyrol and Switzerland, the gorgeous spectacle of the sun rising and setting, the sublimity of the thunderstorms, the peculiar piles of mist which look like aerial spectres, hovering over mountain and valley, are very rarely seen in the Caucasus, where, during summer, the clear, blue cloudless, sky is seldom overcast. Once only did I enjoy the spectacle of a violent thunder-storm, it was on the 8th of August, about mid-day there reigned an unusual stillness in the atmosphere, whilst a gloomy twilight gradually stole over the landscape, magical and ever varying lights glanced across the mountain peaks, caused by the broken rays of the sun. The silence was, at length, interrupted by the most terrific explosions, and then commenced a scene, to which my feeble pen is unable to do justice. The giants of the Caucasus looked dark and mysterious in the sullen gloom; clouds, black as ink, edged with a yellow or blood-red border, sped fleetly past, and spectral shapes of mist in continual metamorphosis, were driven

along by the raging storm ; the dense masses of clouds emitted molten streams of red and blue forked lightning, which cast over the snowy slopes of the Caucasus a lurid horrible brightness, and the triply echoing peals of thunder reverberated with solemn grandeur through the mountains. At length, when the contending elements had expended their wrath in angry strife, a beautiful double rainbow gently spread its lovely tinted bow across the sullen sky, as peacemaker, and lastly, the silvery beams of the moon burst forth upon the scene. The lightning grew less vivid—the thunder rolled growling away, and the wrath of the elements was appeased.

I remember only two scenes, in all my wanderings, at all comparable with this, one was in the highlands of Armenia, the other in the Swiss Alps, near the Lake of Lucerne. The storm had concentrated itself around the mountains of that neighbourhood, and I actually stood within its atmosphere. The valley of the Rigi, with the little village of St. Maria Zum Schnee, with the peaks of the mountains, were illuminated by magical electric lights, resembling Bengal fire. A rainbow of unusual brilliancy spanned the

Rigi, terminating in the valley beneath ; a few greyish clouds of changeful appearance, swept constantly to and fro ; if to this, we add the wonderfully beautiful panorama of this celebrated locality—a scene may be imagined little inferior to that of the Caucasus.

I have seen the sun rise and set from both the Kreuzberg and the Kasbek, but have no hesitation in saying, the scene is less enchanting than from the mountains of Switzerland or the Tyrol. It is unaccompanied, in the Caucasus, by that beautiful purple and rich change of colouring, which is usual in the European Alps.

Being driven by the fleas, one morning, earlier than usual from my couch in the wretched post-house, I found it light enough to contemplate the distant panorama of the wild mountain region which surrounded me. To the north, the higher snow-covered peaks of the Caucasian Alps were visible ; to the east, rose lofty, precipitous mountains, mostly of a pyramidal form ; to the south, the summits only of the mountains were snow-capped, whilst thick forests clothed their base. To the west, the mountains were of a lower elevation than the

others, and, except in the ravines and hollows, were free from snow. It was completely daylight before the sun appeared. The edges of the clouds floating above the western mountains were first illuminated; then the higher peaks of the central chain to the north caught the glow. Their relative height was easily ascertained by the rotation in which they reflected the first beams of the God of day. The eastern horizon then burst forth like a brilliant conflagration, and, at last, the sun rose, dazzling and golden, but without the rosy blush of dawn.

Beautiful as this was, sunrise from the Rigi and sunset from the Bernese Oberland, are incomparably finer. How vividly do I remember the summer evenings spent at Interlaken. There the lovely Jungfrau, like a heavenly spirit in purest white, looks down upon pleasant Bödeli; the setting sun reflects a rosy light upon it, exquisitely beautiful, which, as it fades away, leaves a solemn, death-like effect upon the imagination, as if the spirit of the mountain had passed away, leaving only the corpse, adorned by its circlet of green forest, for the last ceremony. I have seen nothing similar to this in the Caucasus.

From the Terek steppes and the uplands of Georgia, the Caucasian mountains surpass those of Europe in grandeur, and as the Russians are not yet acquainted with a hundredth part of their valleys and ravines, there may be many highly picturesque spots, scarcely inferior to our Alpine scenes, and waterfalls to equal in beauty those of the Aar at Handek, or the Reichenbach in the lower valley of Hasli; but it is ascertained with tolerable certainty from the natives, that this mountain region is totally deficient in those lovely crystal lakes, one of the greatest charms of Switzerland, and which render it the most beautiful mountain region in the world. Such a union of the lovely and sublime, as may be met with about the Lake of Thun, or on the north side of the Lake of Lucerne, opposite Mont Pilatus, might be in vain sought for in the Caucasus. Neither can the varied and picturesque charm of the view from the Rigi be equalled from any of the Caucasian heights. The forests of the Caucasus, especially towards the Black Sea, and the flora of the treeless region, are decidedly richer and more extensive than those of the Tyrol and Switzerland; but this does not out-

weigh the loveliness of the Alpine lakes, or the magnificence of the Swiss glaciers. The character of the scenery from the Ketschaur leaves the beholder cold and untouched, whilst the mere remembrance of the exquisite landscapes of Switzerland and the Tyrol force us to exclaim with Victor Jacquemont, who, at the sight of the highest mountains of the globe—the Himalaya—cried, “ Oh ! how lovely are the Alps of Europe !”

CHAPTER IX.

Illustrations of the Caucasian Nations—The Tschetschensians
and the Ossetians.

THE erudite and intellectual author of the “History of the Empire of Trebizond,” calls the Caucasus, “the gate through which the first unshapen rudiments of culture have passed from the East into Europe.” Ritter, in his classical work, “The Antechamber of the History of European Nations,” has dwelt on the great importance of the Caucasian mountains, in connection with our most ancient history, and has illustrated the subject with profound and acute researches, and Fallmerayer considers it a matter of certainty, that tribes of emigrants passed over the Euxine as conquerors or settlers from the Caucasian isthmus, in

mythical times, to the districts about Hœmus and Olympus, and that the most ancient history of Greece is to be traced, not in the Peloponnesus, in Attica, or Doris, but in the glens of the Caucasus. But, hitherto, all historical researches have failed in pointing out which of the present Caucasian tribes shared in these momentous migrations. Perhaps this problem may be solved in the future, if all the districts of the Caucasus are visited by skilful philologists, and ethnographers. One of the most distinguished members of the Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg has proposed this comprehensive plan of an expedition to the Caucasus. A special inquirer should be devoted exclusively to every Caucasian dialect. An important advantage might accrue to our historical and ethnographical knowledge, if the Russian government could be induced to adopt this plan.

Several eminent scholars have occupied themselves of late years with the language of the Western Caucasus. Sjögren and Dubois de Montpereux have confirmed, by careful study, the opinion previously advanced by Klaproth, that the Ossetians dwelling on the highest Caucasian Alps, are of Median origin. Chora-Beg-

Mursin-Nogma, serving in the Circassian squadron of the guard, at St. Petersburg, has recently published a grammar of the Kabardan language, which is almost identical with the Circassian. There occur words in this language which are frightfully difficult to be pronounced by a European tongue, *e. g.*, *Kithetschebsip-pogopsi* (flowing water), *thithl* (book), &c. The Russian academician, Sjögren, observes that he has practised for hours together to obtain the proper pronunciation of the latter word, but that he only succeeded in doing so twice. The most recent labours of the Swiss, Dubois, in connection with the west Circassian languages are very important. By careful comparison, he has shown with much perspicuity, that the idioms of the Circassians, Kabardans, and Abchasiens, belong to the Tschudic stock of languages, and are very closely allied to the Finnic. No one has devoted his attention to the dialect of the Ubiches, Tschigetes, and Suanetians; and we are in like manner almost entirely ignorant of the idioms of the Eastern Caucasus, spoken by the Avars, Ingusches, Tschetschensians, Kists, Kudetches, Chasy-

kumiks, and of the numerous tribes comprehended under the name of Lesghians.

These latter tribes, though generally agreeing in customs, differ often considerably in their languages. Even the number of the different dialects and tongues spoken in the Caucasus is not exactly known. No country upon earth offers so great a medley of races and of languages, within a small compass, as the Eastern Caucasus. Mussudi and Ebn Haukal adduced seventy-two languages ; and Abulfeda calls the mountain of the Albanian gate, Djebel-el-Alason, *i. e.*, the mountain of languages. Güldenstedt has given us a few small vocabularies of some East Caucasian languages ; but they are meagre and unsatisfactory. Several of these idioms appear even to exceed the Kabardan in uncouthness of tone. Pallas says that the Ingusches speak, as if they have stones in their mouth. During my residence in Trans-Caucasia, I formed an acquaintance with a Lesghian. Though philology is not my branch of study, actuated rather by curiosity than any scientific motive, I wished to turn my acquaintance with this man to account, in drawing up a short vocabulary

of his dialect. To this end, I profited by the assistance of Mr. Abowian, at Tiflis, a distinguished linguist, who speaks Tartar admirably—a tongue which is currently spoken among the Lesghians, besides their own idiom. But this little, trifling undertaking of mine encountered greater impediments than I had anticipated: for many Lesghian words are so extremely uncouth, that it appears to me impossible to describe them with our alphabet. Occasionally, some tones would occur that are quite indescribable, appearing to issue from the very intestines of the Lesghian, and to stick in his throat on delivery. I found it impossible to help laughing out loud at some of his tones; but the Lesghian was offended at this, and did not visit me again.

1. THE TSCHETSCHENSIANS.

The Tschetschensians are at the head of the resistance to the northern aggressor in the eastern Caucasus, in the same way that the Circassians form the nucleus of opposition in the western Caucasus, whilst the smaller or tamer tribes of the Abchasians, Ubiches, Tschi-getians, Tartars of the Elbrus (Karatschai), and the Kabardans, related with the Adighè by

blood and tongue, rally round them. The term Tschetschensians is only strictly applicable to a small clan of this people, which has, however, become so very prominent by its boldness and energy, that the Russians designate the whole people by this appellation ; though including the Kists and Ingusches, which are related to them, the whole tribe of genuine Tschetschensians does not exceed 150,000 souls. The clan is called Mädschegi by the Circassians, Tartars, and Lesghians. The extremely uncouth idiom of the Tschetschensians has nothing in common, either with the Circassian idiom, nor with that of the Lesghians, or that of the Tartars and Ossetians, though single words may, in some cases, have been imported from the different Caucasian idioms into the Tschetschensian tongue. Klaproth represents it as perfectly independent and original in its structure, adding, however, that it has adopted many terms from the language of the neighbouring tribe of Avars. The historical origin of the Tschetschensians is involved in the deepest obscurity. They are regarded as the aborigines of the Caucasian isthmus, who, like the other nations inhabit-

ing “the craggy citadel of the Caucasus,” have preserved the uncouth customs and military spirit of their ancestors, and they are still as in the time of *Æschylus*,

“Wild troops, terrible in battle and clash of brazen spears.”

The Tschetschensians have, at a very recent period, given a terrible denial to the German *savant* who, in his book, “Russia and the Circassians,” estimates so slightly the powers of resistance inherent in the Caucasian nations, and regards them as infallibly doomed to fall under the Russian sceptre and sword. Ritter, our celebrated geographer, gifted with such a marvellous penetration, has more correctly appreciated the defensive strength of these Caucasian mountaineers, when he says: “The wars of Timur, of Peter the Great, and of Nadir Shah, against the people of the eastern Caucasus, have proved that these localities of Daghestan and Lesghistan belong to the great isolated citadels of nations, which are able to protect their defenders and occupants against all the waves of nations that may break against them, and which hurl back the hosts of the mightiest rulers, in the same way that the

raging breakers are dashed back by the cliffs that gird the islands of the ocean."

The Tschetschensians inhabit the beautiful mountain district between the high Caucasian chain and the Terek. Their territory is limited to the eastward by the Koissu, to the westward, by the pass leading from Vladikaukas to Trans-Caucasia. This mountain district abounds in magnificent forests and pasturages; but the lofty situation of the valleys in the Tschetschenian territory, only admits of scanty harvests of corn. Nevertheless, harvest time is an important season for the mountaineers, who commonly remain very quiet till the grain is carried and stacked. When late in the autumn, the hayricks have disappeared from the fields, and the raging waters of the Terek and Sundscha have fallen, it is well known along the Cossack line that no great interval will elapse ere the warlike Tschetschensian yell will be heard. All the Russian posts situated in the Terek plains from Vladikaukas to Vnesapnaja, and exposed to the incursions of the Tschetschensians, Vladikaukas, Grosnaja, Girselaul, and Temirchantschura, are at present the chief centres of Russian operations against the Tschetschensians. The spare bar-

barians of the Caucasus can be seen daily in great numbers in the above named fortresses. Like the Circassians, they visit the Russian fortresses, chiefly for diversion, and the Russians who anticipate beneficial results from frequent intercourse with their enemies, let them enter and depart from their strongholds without any impediment.

At Vladikaukas, a large and important stronghold on the Terek, I saw, for the first time, many bodies of Tschetschensians together, and as I was just come from the Kouban, where I had seen the Circassians, it was natural that I should compare the impression made upon me by these two people. They both play the same part in the Caucasus, but differ in their language and origin, and had no intercourse till within the last few years. I find the following opinion on the Tschetschensians, in my diary, written at Vladikaukas. The Tschetschensians please me less than the Circassians, whom they resemble in their spare figures, bold carriage, and aquiline noses, but without having an identical expression of the whole face. In the countenance of the Circassian Ustdens, there prevails a frank, open dashing, and somewhat wild expression, and

their bearing is so chivalrous, that you cannot look at these bandit chiefs without pleasure. A greater energy, and a more sinister and threatening character prevails in the more swarthy faces of the Tschetschensians ; I saw men amongst them, whose eyes flashed with a cunning and sanguinary spirit that terrified me. I could safely accept the hospitality and friendship of a Circassian Usden, but I should not venture to accede to the invitation of a Tschetschensian to visit his aoul. The faces of the Tchetschensian are, generally speaking, somewhat thinner and longer than those of the Circassians, their black beards are more scanty than with other Orientals, *e. g.*, the Turks and the Arabs. Their costume, however, appears to be common to all the tribes of the Caucasus ; scanty brown breeches, brown coats, with a leathern belt round their hips, and with party coloured pockets on both sides of the breast, where they keep their cartridges. Their head is adorned with the Caucasian turban, a great cap variegated at the top, with a broad fur brim, which slouching down over the forehead, increases the wild and sinister character of the physiognomies of these mountaineers. All wore broad kinschals in their belt, and many of

them a long pistol slung over their back. Some chieftains were much more richly clothed ; they wore coats with silver embroidery, and splendid daggers and swords with silver handles. The Tschetschensians, who together with a considerable number of Ossetians and Kabardans were present at the military review, superintended by General Baldinin, in the large square at Vladikaukas, appeared to regard the sight with interest, whilst I surveyed the picturesque figures of the mountaineers with the same feeling.

I reproduce this fragment from my diary, without any alteration, but I confess that the narratives that I had previously heard related by Russian officers, concerning the Circassians and Tschetschensians, may have had some influence on the comparison that I made between the two people. All Russian accounts are somewhat more favourable to the inhabitants of the Western Caucasus than to the tribes peopling the eastern part of the chain.

The faithful observance of oaths is not so common among the Tchetschensians, they treat their prisoners with greater severity, and they are moreover animated with a religious fanaticism,

unknown to the Circassians. The latter characteristic peculiarity distinguishes the Eastern from the Western Caucasians. Among the Circassians, few individuals are circumcised, and if they have cared rather more for the Koran latterly, it resulted more from their wish to show their hostility and hatred to the Christian Russian, than from any spiritual impulse. I received very remarkable oral statements respecting them, from one of the two Englishmen who lived two years among the Circassians with Bell. This Englishman, who had long resided in the East, remarked that "religious intolerance is seldom quite obliterated among the Moslems of the East. Even the enlightened Turks still feel a slight disinclination towards us, which originates in the difference of religion. Not a trace of this is to be found among the Circassians, they knew that Bell and I were opponents of the Russians, and that was enough to secure us a friendly reception amongst them. No one asked about our faith. If the Circassians were not engaged in strife against Russia, they would show the greatest indifference to Islam." In Bell's "Journal of a Residence in Circassia," many passages likewise occur, proving with what little

religious enthusiasm the Circassians are animated. It was once discussed in an assembly of Usdens, if the corn should be burned in case the Russians attacked them. One chieftain remarked: "our book, (the Koran) forbids this." "Oh," rejoined another, "a good deal of nonsense is written in our book."

A remark of this kind would hardly have been ventured by Turkish Grandees. The sophistical ulemas at Constantinople will never find it difficult to discover passages in that obscure and contradictory book, which by forced interpretation can justify every exclusive regulation, as in the case of that expression in the Koran which pronounces "disorder as worse than murder," and which was made use of by the ulemas to vindicate the practice of fraticide, introduced by Mohammed, and made a law of the empire. But it would never occur to Turkish grandees, openly to reject the language of the Koran, whilst the principal grounds for resistance to Russia, among the Circassians, are an innate love of freedom and independence, together with, perhaps, the hope of plunder and booty; the hatred of Russian supremacy among the Tschetschensians, finds its chief lever in the

glowing fanaticism. All great leaders of the Tschetschensians from Scheik Mansur, who knew twenty thousand spiritual verses by heart, down to Schamyl, the present chief of the Tchetschensians, who plays the part of a prophet, have felt the necessity of basing their secular power on the religious fanaticism of their people, just as Abd-el-Kader did in Algeria. This religious fanaticism in the Eastern Caucasus, facilitates the cohesion of tribes speaking different idioms, under one head, and impedes the progress of conquest to the numerous Russian hosts, which are sure to encounter a protracted resistance in the heroic valour of the mountaineers, the natural features of their territory, a universal citadel for nations, and especially in their ardent religious enthusiasm.

During my residence on the banks of the Terek, and amongst the high Caucasian Alps, I received many interesting accounts of the mode of life, and customs of the Tschetschensians. I was especially attracted by the simple story of a Polish soldier, who had spent almost a year as prisoner amongst that people, and who was detained, moreover, in the immediate neighbourhood of the dreaded chief, Schamyl, whom he

was forced to serve as a slave. He was not able to endure the rough life in the mountains, the severe climate, and the coarse fare, and he took advantage of the first opportunity that offered to return under the Russian double-eagle, though as a Pole, he felt very little sympathy for its cause. If we may credit his statement, he had been taken prisoner by the mountaineers during an expedition of General Grabbe; and he narrowly escaped receiving the three thousand blows with rods, that are commonly inflicted on Russian deserters in the Caucasus, and which imply as much as dying a torturing death, unless there are some humanely disposed officers, who know him, to mitigate the severity of the chastisement. It was with great difficulty that the unfortunate Pole succeeded in convincing the court-martial of his innocence, and escaped an agonizing punishment, which, even according to the admission of Russian officers, is often inflicted on innocent men.

According to the statement of this Pole and other prisoners, who had escaped, or been exchanged, almost the same remarks apply to the dwellings, mode of life, and occupation of the Tschetschensians, as to those of the Circassians.

2. THE OSSETIANS.

The Ossetians have retained no knowledge or memory of the age when their ancestors migrated from other countries to the Caucasian mountains. Their first conversion to Christianity is attributed to Queen Thamar, whose armies are reported to have brought into the Caucasus the crosses, whereof the effigy is often seen on the rocks. The Russians made many efforts, after the occupation of Georgia, to win back to Christianity the Ossetians, who had long since relapsed into Paganism. This was easily accomplished with a people indifferent about religious matters, especially as a linen shirt and a silver cross were given to every Ossetian who underwent baptism. The pious zeal of the new converts was greatly excited by these means, and there was no end to the number of neophytes who aspired to the right of baptism, till at length it came to pass, that one *immersion* was not reckoned sufficient, and that many Ossetians, in order to become genuine Christians, and at the same time to become the owners of a respectable amount of linen, received the holy sacrament five or six times following.

I myself, saw no trace of Christianity among the Ossetians, save that they gave their children Christian names, and can make the sign of the cross.

The Russian government has, for some time, installed priests of the Russo-Greek church in Ossetia. According to the notion of these priests, it constitutes a deadly sin to eat meat, or any animal produce, such as milk, eggs, &c., during their long fasts : and they have begun to preach fasting to their new flocks. But the Ossetian men were scandalized at this. "God," said they, "is very sparing of corn to us on our mountains, and has left us entirely to be supported by our herds and flocks. We shall die of hunger, if we abstain for forty days, from the enjoyment of that which God has given us to support life. But if it be really God's will, that we should fast, he will keep us in health and strength, without any food ; and in order to see if this be really the case, we will make the experiment on you priests." A tribe near Vladikaukas, made the first experiment of shutting up their parson. No bread was given to him, but a glorious piece of roast beef, baked in butter and grease, was laid before him on the

table. The unhappy curator of souls was a good deal distressed, but he managed to hold out the first day. On the second day, however, the good Pope was overcome by the assaults of the flesh, and attacked the joint of beef as bravely as if it had been the eve of the carnival. Hereupon the Ossetian chiefs joined him, laughing heartily.

" You see now," they said, " that it is the will of God we should enjoy, at all seasons, the gifts He has presented to us." And at these words, they sat down beside the shepherd of their souls, and helped him to dispatch the roast beef he had attacked. The strict accuracy of this occurrence has been guaranteed to me on the best authority.

A new church has been built at Kobi ; and I was very curious to see what would be the behaviour of the Ossetians during Divine service. I did not, therefore, delay to go there on the first Sunday of my stay, entering the church punctually as the bells began to ring. But the church was as yet very empty, and the Pope, in splendid vestments, with his attendants, was at the door. The bells rang a second and a third time ; but none of the Ossetians entered the church, though numbers of them were

walking up and down before the booths of Kobi. At length, the Pope began the mass ; and the whole devout assembly consisted of a Russian post-boy, who, it must be admitted, kissed the pictures of the saints with great unction. If the Russian government had permitted other Christian confessions to hold intercourse with the mountaineers of the Caucasus, possibly Christianity might have been something better amongst these men, than “ sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.”

Capuchins of the Romish propaganda have settled in Georgia and Imeritia ; but they have been strictly forbidden to make proselytes, even among the Mahometans and heathen. Some Protestant missionaries who were sent out from Bâle, men of cultivated minds and the noblest impulses, were driven out of the country by Baron Rosen, in a manner which attaches an eternal disgrace to the name of this former Governor-General. I am acquainted with young Catholic Imeritians, who ardently wish to be educated as missionaries in the school of the Propaganda at Rome ; but the permission of going to the capital of Catholic Christendom is always withheld from

them. No Jew, heathen, or Mohammedan, can become a Christian in Russia, if he do not determine to enter the Russo-Greek Church. In southern Russia, it has happened more than once, that Jews of education have been moved by the sublime and solemn service of the Catholic Church, or by the simple worship of Protestantism, often equally efficacious in rousing and touching the heart, whilst the comfortless formalities of the Greek ceremonies, and the uncultivated character of the Russian priests deterred them. But they were not suffered to become either Catholics or Protestants ; and as they would not accept the Russo-Greek faith, they were forced to remain Jews.

Christianity, such as it has been taught to the Ossetians, has not contributed, in the least, in refining the manners of this people. The Ossetians are still, as formerly, regarded as the one of the tribes in the Caucasus that is most addicted to murder, without possessing the heroic valour of the Circassians and Tschetschensians. Blood feuds still prevail amongst them in all their force, and revenge in general, which is constantly attacked in Christianity by the beautiful and merciful principle of love, is especially pre-

dominant amongst them. It happened, during my stay in the country, that eight sheep belonging to an Ossetian, were secretly butchered, during the night. It is possible that the proprietor of the sheep had inflicted some injury on the horse of the man who had cut their throats ; and this is the way in which redress is sought in the Caucasus. But a really dreadful circumstance occurred a few years ago in Ossetia. Two tribes had been excited to the most furious rage and a deadly feud, by a murder ; and many of their members lost their lives, partly in a fair fight, partly by foul means. But as both clans were numerous and powerful, no end could be seen to this feud, till both were utterly exterminated. A compromise was effected, and their dead were counted on both sides. One of the tribes, which had suffered greater losses than the other, received as a compensation a number of children from the rival tribe, who were barbarously butchered, whereupon peace was concluded. I often after made enquiries to ascertain if the Russian priesthood had done nothing to counteract this fearful custom, on Christian grounds ; but I was told in reply

that the priests did not meddle with this practice which is certainly disgraceful, but of long standing, and that, notwithstanding the unlucky adventure of the roast-beef, they persist in preaching a strict observance of fasting to their Ossetian flocks.

A journey from Kobi to Oni is, at the present time, almost unattended with danger, and the traveller may venture even as far as the district of the Suanis, who are but little known, and who dwell in the western part of the higher Alps, in the neighbourhood of the most magnificent glaciers, without risk of losing his life, if he place himself under the protection of a Suanian, which he can easily obtain by a donation. In every expedition, however, great caution is required. A couple of stout guides, and good weapons, protect you sufficiently against a single robber, and there is little danger of being attacked by a larger number. I would not, however, recommend any one to travel *alone* here.

Being made quite secure, through the good reception I encountered in a village, I was induced to do a very unwise thing. Both my

servants, the Hungarian and the Cossack, had remained ill at Kobi, and I made a long excursion amongst the mountains alone, with no weapon but my kinschal. Whilst I stood on a beautiful tract of mountain table-land, absorbed in the contemplation of the Kasbek, to the eastward of Kobi, which, with its everlasting masses of snow, presented a surpassingly magnificent appearance, two Ossetians drew near me, and addressed me in broken Russian, inviting me to follow them to their aoul. I was very thirsty, and the prospect of a bowl of fresh milk, overcame the impression which had been created by the unprepossessing physiognomies of these two individuals. Having arrived in the village, I was, as usual, surrounded by many curious persons, whose importunities soon assumed a threatening character. A hundred thievish eyes flashed upon me from under their rakish caps, surveying me, and all I had about me, with undisguised covetousness. They asked me if I were alone, and they talked together, in such a tone and manner as augured me no good. As they did not see anything very tempting about me, they wanted to have my

entomological needles, on which I stuck my butterflies and beetles, and these I distributed amongst them without hesitation. Half-a-dozen hands then attempted to handle my kinschal, but I drew it out quickly, and said in Russian : “ My friends, I am very sorry not to have known that I should have been with you to-day. I have all kinds of pretty things at home, which I brought with me from Tiflis. To-morrow, I will bring them to you here, in gratitude for your friendly reception.”

These necessary lies did not fail in their effect ; they let me drink the milk in peace, and asked me what presents I had in Kobi for them. I promised them tobacco and powder, which, after gold, is most esteemed by the Ossetians. This good prospect occasioned great joy. I, however, made haste to take my leave, and get away as fast as I could from this mountain nest, firmly resolved never to return to it again, or ever to visit another aoul without an escort. If any of the Ossetian shepherds beckoned to me from a distance on the grassy slopes of the mountain, I always hastened to climb, up or down, in another

direction ; and as the Ossetians do not use their legs willingly without a motive, I was quite sure they would not follow me.

The Ossetians belong to the great Indo-Germanic race—at least, all the learned, who have studied their language most attentively, agree in this opinion. Dubois and Sjögren appear to have accomplished the most in this respect, although their researches are, as yet, very defective. The dress of this people is in no respect different from that of the Circassians.

Like them, they have the slender form and light, magnificent carriage ; but in beauty, and energetic expression of countenance, they are generally inferior to the Circassians, as well as the rest of the Caucasians, with the exception, perhaps, of the Lesghians, amongst whom, there are a great number of ugly individuals. Their skin is less dark than that of the Tschetschensians, their hair and beards not so black as those of the Circassians. One of the earlier travellers in the Caucasus, if I am not mistaken, Klaproth, says, the Ossetians are all fair ; no individuals with black hair are to be seen amongst them. This is essentially false.

Most of the Ossetians have dark, if not coal black hair. There are many individuals who have brown and red hair; but there are few genuine blondes. I once related to an Ossetian in Tiflis, that, amongst the learned in Germany, it is a common opinion, that we Germans are of the same stock as the Ossetians, and that our forefathers formerly dwelt in the Caucasian mountains. The Ossetian, who was a very handsome man, with the Circassian aquiline profile, laughed outright at this; and an educated Russian, who was standing near, agreed with him.

A Wurtemberg peasant, of the colony of Marienfield, was just then passing by. The plump figure of this German, his broad countenance, with its heavy expression, and his slouching gait, contrasted certainly, in a striking manner, with the glorious figure of the Caucasian. "How is it possible," said the Russian, "that there can be such fools amongst you, as to believe that people of such different types, could possibly proceed from the same stock? No, the ancestors of these two men, have no more come from the same nest, than hawks and turkey-

cocks. Look you, this Ossetian and that German carry on the same business. They plough the field and tend the cattle. Let them send their peasants to the high mountains, and dress them all in the Caucasian coat, yet you would never make an Ossetian, or Circassian out of them. Even a thousand years hence, it will be easy to distinguish the posterity of both, a mile off."

CHAPTER X.

The Russian army in the Caucasus.

THE strength of the Russian army in the Caucasus is continually varying according to the mortality, and the accession of reinforcements. In 1843, it amounted to more than 117,000 men, of whom 75,000 to 80,000 belonged to the force in Cis-Caucasia, who are scattered in garrisons in the forts along the Black Sea, and in the kreposts along the Kouban, the Terek, the Sundscha and the Koissu.

Whoever takes the trouble to cast a glance over the map, and see the immensely extended line of the Russian operations, will not be surprised at the effective force of 80,000 men in Cis-Caucasia, because this army has not only to guard the east coast of the Black Sea, in a chain

of forts, intended to cut off all communication between the Circassians and Turkey, but also to protect the extensive Cossack settlements on the Kouban and the Terek, embracing a length of 1200 versts, and to watch the two great arteries of communication with Trans-Caucasia. Besides all this, it must furnish the necessary troops for the expeditionary columns of the Russians against the interior of the hostile territory. The occurrences in Daghestan, in the years 1842-43, have proved, that up to that date, the force had been even insufficient, and pressing requests were made for reinforcements, especially as the destructive fevers were unusually fatal in those years. In years when the intermittent fevers were most fatal, there commonly died one-sixth of the whole Caucasian army. The mortality was especially great in the fortresses along the Black Sea ; and experience has proved that the intermediate countries between the hills and the sea, where the blocking up of rivers creates great marshes, are not the most unhealthy, but that it is the sea air that gives a predisposition to fever, in countries near the coast, and exposed to it. In proportion as the Russians build kreposts, to encircle the moun-

tains, they weaken their line of operations, and they require a greater accession of strength. The Russians have committed the same fault in Circassia, as the French in Algeria in former years, when they attempted to strengthen their position by numerous fortified villages, intrenched camps, block-houses, &c., till Abd-el-Kader showed the futility of the plan, by breaking into the Mitidja plain in 1839, (November). Bugeaud superseded this system by *colonnes mobiles*, and obtained great successes. In the Caucasus, the former enterprize of Chasi-Mullah against Kislar, the attack of Mosdok by the Tschetschenians, and the success of Schamyl in Avaria, have proved the impossibility of checking the incursions of an uncommonly swift enemy ; and there is reason to anticipate that orders will emanate from St. Petersburg, to change a system that has been hitherto so unprofitable. If the intelligence I received in southern Russia were correct, concerning the movements of troops in the Caucasus, the efficient force of the Russians in Caucasia, including 20,000 fresh troops, will amount to 100,000 men. The 37,000 men in the Trans-Caucasian provinces, are much scattered, and serve chiefly to guard the extensive

frontier lines on the side of Persia and Turkey, in order to protect the Russian territory from the inroads of the plague, and of smugglers. The frontier guards consist chiefly of Don Cossacks; but they do not prevent the entrance of the Oriental contagion, or of English contraband goods. The plague is continually imported from Bajesid into the Tartar villages of the province of Erivan; and smuggling, though on a small scale, is actively carried on, especially with Persia.

At Vladikaukas, the great stronghold of the Russians in the Caucasus, I was present, for the first time, at a review of Russian troops. I had previously observed among the Tchernomorski Cossacks a resemblance to the Magyars, and, in the Line Cossacks, a greater mixture of types; and now, amongst the infantry, I remarked an almost universal prevalence of the Sclavonic type. All the soldiers were powerfully built men, with broad faces, broad shoulders, and respectable mustachios; and they performed their evolutions with incredible accuracy. Notwithstanding the very unbecoming grey great-coats, there is no mistaking the uncommonly powerful frame of the Sclavonians. The Russian regi-

ments seem almost exclusively composed of grenadiers with broad shoulders and large bones; and I am not surprised that such men have always been formidable opponents in a charge of bayonets. Ségur relates that, on the field of Borodino, you could always distinguish a Russian from a French or German body, by its greater massiveness. Such a large and solid make, with such considerable muscular development, gives the Russians in rank and file, a great advantage over troops that are not so powerfully built. To this must be added an iron discipline, which the Russian army possesses in a higher degree than any other in Europe, the habit of obedience and of endurance till death, and that bull-dog stubbornness peculiar to the Sclavonians, who never let go when they have once seized hold. Frederic the Great used to say: "The Russians can be killed, but they cannot be worsted;" and his dashing hussar, Seidlitz, who scattered the perfumed and powdered French at Rossbach like chaff, had to sweat blood with his bearded troopers, at Zorndorf, before the day declared against the Russians. Napoleon's victorious guard experienced the same resistance at Eylau.

The grenadier stature of Russian soldiers, and their property of standing like a wall in a shower of bullets, are very valuable qualities in regular pitched battles, and an open country, but they are not of much service in the Caucasus, where the stout Russian climbs up the steeps, puffing, sweating, and with endless labour, whilst the slender, active Tschetschensian runs up them in half the time. The tribes of the Caucasus know the strength of the Russians in rank and file, when shoulder to shoulder, in serried array, they present a stern fence of bayonets to the assailant. The charges of the Circassian cavalry fall powerless on these steely cliffs. But the Tschetschensians know from experience the weak side of the Russian army. They avoid as far as possible to engage with a close column ; but they dart down on the Russian skirmishers with the greatest confidence, and then every mountaineer singles out his foe. The lusty, broad-shouldered Russian, with heavy knapsack, and a dress that hinders his movements, is threatened by an active enemy, who circles round him like a bird of prey, searching for the vulnerable point of his muscular but unwieldly foe with his schashka,

and wearying him with his evolutions. It is like the battle of the royal eagle with the buck, who shows his strong horns to his foe, but can only defend himself, and is unable to attack his antagonist, or to follow him in the air, and ends by falling a prey to his claws. A Russian officer once said to me : "One would have supposed that the Russian soldier, with his longer weapon, the bayonet, would have the advantage in single combat over the Tschetschensian, who only carries a sword and kinschal to cut and thrust with. But this is far from the case. Amongst those that fall in these duels, the Russians bear the proportion of one-third more than the Circassians. It is also a remarkable fact, that the Russian soldier, who meets death with such wonderful courage in serried array, and shows so much bravery in battle with the regular armies of Europe, with the Persians and Turks, often behaves with pusillanimity in the Caucasus, and runs away from the outposts and kreposts, notwithstanding the severe punishment to which he exposes himself. I myself," continued this officer, "ran the greatest risk in the murderous engagements at Itschkeri (July, 1842), because I

ran to help a tirailleur, who was fighting with a Tschetschensian, when the soldier took to his heels, and left me to fight it out alone with the mountaineer."

Other disadvantages are added to that experienced by the Russian, from his strong, unwieldly body, in conflict with another, perhaps physically weaker, but more dexterous and supple in mountain warfare. The severe discipline, and the bodily chastisements convert the Russian soldier into a very ductile member of an army corps, which has its advantages in fighting in masses. But in fighting man to man, and dispersed, the combatant who is only brave from obedience, is not on an equal footing with him who is impelled to battle by enthusiasm and hatred of the foe. During my nomadic life in the Trans-Caucasian mountains, when I slept in the woods some nights, my gallant young Hungarian servant was amused and astonished, at the timidity and cowardice of our Cossacks. And yet, the same men who behaved so pusillanimously at the distant possibility of an attack of robbers, would have died without flinching in the midst of their squadron. We shall more easily comprehend the successful

resistance of the Caucasian mountaineers, if we consider the advantage they possess in their very abstemious habits, when, like the Circassians and Tschetschensians, they can live for weeks on a little flour and spring water, with wild fruits, whilst the men of the North, with large stomachs, are used to substantial fare. The difficulty of the war is greatly increased to the Russians, by the want of provisions, and by the obstacles that oppose the passage of a large convoy in the mountains. In such inhospitable regions as the Caucasian isthmus, those remain commonly masters of the field, who can stand out against hunger the longest.

Marshal Marmont gives in his Travels, a comparative table of the expenses of maintaining soldiers in each of the five principal European kingdoms. According to his statement, an Austrian infantry soldier, costs 212 francs: a Prussian, 240: a Frenchman, 340: an English foot soldier, 538: and a Russian, only 120 francs. If this estimate is correct, which cannot be doubted, as the author was well informed, and had such good sources of information; a regiment costs* less to support

* Russian regiments have four battalions.

in Russia, than a battalion in England, and the Russian soldier, who on account of his northern constitution, has a larger stomach than all the others, is forced to put up with the worst fare of all. We have here to remark, that of the 120 francs, forming his pay, many silver pieces may wander into the pockets of others, before the money finds its way to the barracks, in the shape of rations, clothing, and pay. A Russian sub-officer, whom I questioned on the subject, endeavoured to show me, by a very detailed analysis, that the private, including his clothing, ration, and pay, hardly receives one-third of that amount. In hard cash, the Russian soldier in the Caucasus, receives yearly, nine roubles, hence about two pfennigs per day, out of which he has to buy his cap, his cravat, soap, blacking, pipe-clay, and salt for his soup.

"Our soldiers are forced to steal a little," added the sub-officer. "This paltry sum scarcely suffices for soap and blacking. If the soldier's linen is not always white, and his boots are not always well polished, he receives a thrashing with a rod."

Every Russian soldier in the Caucasus, receives for his daily food, three pounds of

bread, of the colour of coal, a watery soup, to which three pounds of bacon are added, for 250 men, a ration of brandy, and once a week a piece of meat. The same sub-officer, a German, serving in Daghestan added: "God lends strength to our men, by a miracle, for it would be impossible for them to support all the hardships of this war, with such bad fare, unless they were thus assisted."

But these observations only apply to the Eastern Caucasus; the garrisons on the Black Sea, who receive their supply from transports, and are more frequently inspected by the superior generals, are provided like the Russian Marines, with good and nourishing food. It is well known, and written down in most works of travels, that the functionaries in Russia, especially those of the middle or lower rank, are apt to make singular mistakes, relating to money matters, and are continually confounding the *meum* and *tuum*. During my residence of a year and a half, on the Russian soil, scarcely a day passed without my hearing complaints on this subject, from men of the most various professions, and I heard so many stories related about it, that I was at length

quite bored with them. I naturally avoided all comments on the subject, and I commonly satisfied myself with remarking, when my opinion was asked, that every country has its peculiar customs and usages. It is certain that Shakespeare would not have said in Russia : 'Conscience makes cowards of us all.' The following saying of Hadji Baba is applicable to the army of functionaries, especially to those who have to carry on law suits.

You need only show the beloved gold,
And every head will incline.
The iron beam does not resist
The scale that hath the greater weight.

I heard many victims exclaim : "ah ! if the Emperor knew this !" They have not yet lost all hope, that matters will still improve ; they have a great confidence in the stern justice of the Emperor Nicholas, and they only lament the great distance from St. Petersburg, which generally prevents the voice of the oppressed from reaching it. The short visit of the Emperor is still in the lively recollection of every one ; especially of the soldiers. On this occasion, the Czar stood forth one day in all his majesty, as criminal judge of injustice : General

Prince Dadian was accused by an unknown person, to the Emperor, of having employed offensive expressions to his soldiers. At a review at Tiflis, the Emperor, in public, before the eyes of the soldiers and people, tore off the golden aiguillettes from the general who wore them as the distinguishing sign of his being a staff officer.

The general was condemned to be degraded, and was obliged to wear the grey coat of the Russian privates, and to carry a musket for many years. This excited the greatest sensation in the army, and the more, because Prince Dadian was son-in-law of Baron Rosen, at that time commander-in-chief of the Caucasian army. The joy of the soldiers would have been undoubtedly increased if such examples of severity had been multiplied, because this was the only way of making them profitable. It was the tacit, though not publicly expressed opinion of most officers, that poor Prince Dadian was greatly to be pitied, as he had not done more or less than many other superior officers, who had not been held responsible for their offences. "Il faut profiter d'une bonne place," is the favourite

saying of most. Such a universal sympathy for a man, whom a just ruler had righteously punished, gives a measure for a correct estimate of the standard of morals prevailing in the Caucasus among the Russians. I grant that the more honest functionaries, and especially the body of the people express many wishes that this deeply seated, and incredible corruption of the employés should be diminished, if it cannot be eradicated, (which now appears impossible). It is not improbable that the soldiers who were placed under the orders of Prince Dadian will be rather pained than pleased at his chastisement. For it is seldom that revenge spares those who complain against their superiors in the Russian army, and this explains the rarity of complaints. Many men deserving of credit, related to me numerous examples of the small advantage derived from complaints, even when they were admitted as well-founded.

I shall cite one of these. A major at Sevastopol was enamoured with the young wife of a sergeant, and as she would not consent to listen to his proposals, the major took every opportunity of ill-treating the man and his wife.

One day, he accused the sergeant of neglecting the proper supervision of his company, another day he charged the woman with not having washed her husband's shirt clean enough ; in short, the unhappy couple had to endure stripes without number. The sergeant, who preferred to endure blows rather than wear horns, ran off, at length, to Simpheropol where the commanding general then resided. His complaints were listened to, and were admitted as well founded, by a commission appointed to examine the case. The major was removed, and the sergeant received from his successor, as a compensation, five hundred blows, ostensibly because he had left the garrison at Sevastopol without leave.

A correspondent of the "Allgemeine Zeitung," who has imparted much edifying intelligence from Russia, writing from the Polish frontier, April 28, 1843, says, "It is confirmed, that the soldiers of the Russian army, henceforth, must not be punished previous to the decision of a Court of Inquiry. Consequently, wilful beating inflicted at the option of the officer will henceforth cease."

Nobody knew anything about such a restriction in the Caucasian army, nor has there been

any talk of the diminution in thrashing. It is true, that a mitigation of capricious chastisements has often been commanded, but as a Russian officer once observed, "It is difficult to carry out such orders, and people do not readily give up old customs."

It is also true, that the exact number of blows is prescribed in all cases for all officers; a lieutenant must not administer above one hundred and fifty, a colonel not more than five hundred. There are often, however, slight errors in calculation. Cedo alteram! A major assured me, that he had given one thousand blows with switches to a soldier of his company, who had many times stolen, and after that, the fellow did not steal any more. (This is very probable, as he must certainly have been lamed for life!) Still, there are some conscientious officers, who are punctilious in not exceeding their powers. I found the statements that I had heard abroad, respecting the punishments in the Russian army, more exaggerated as regards quantity, but many false notions are entertained respecting the quality of the blows. People often talk abroad, of the knout as the common instrument of punishment in the Russian army. This is

entirely false. Soldiers and civilians without distinction, are only knouted when they are condemned to be transported to Siberia. Who-soever is banished to that icy region, if he be not a noble and holds no rank, receives before his departure a number of stripes with the knout, never exceeding twenty-five, as a token of remembrance. It is only great criminals that receive more than twenty-five stripes; but death often precedes the twentieth blow. This fearful instrument of torture is a whip, with a broad, heavy, double-edged leathern lash, seven foot long. The executioner is a pardoned criminal, who is always kept shut up. The candidate for this office is chosen from the most powerful individuals, and the man is bound by fearful oaths, not to mitigate the chastisement of any one, even his own father.

The impression produced by this heavy leathern lash on the naked back is frightful, and at the application of the first stroke, the victim breaks forth into such a dreadful scream, that it can only be compared to those emitted by men on the rack and the wheel, when they were still in use among us. At the tenth or twelfth blow, the scream generally ceases, and

then you commonly only hear the groans of the insensible victim, rising from his couch of agony. "So often as I hear of an execution," said a German to me at Tiflis, "I run out of the town into the mountains, in order not to hear the screams that ring through the whole town. Everything is an affair of habit. I have not yet been long enough in the country, and a German easily turns sick at such an exhibition —strong Russian nerves are wanted to bear it."

I have often witnessed in Alsace, and in the south of France, the compassionate expression of the crowd, who saw a criminal condemned to drag the cannon ball. A shower of silver and copper descended on all hands, the women were especially compassionate, and even the gendarme escort bent down many times to pick up the money, and hand it to the chained prisoner. I have never witnessed such scenes in Russia. The people surround the prisoner with cold, unfeeling curiosity, listen to the groans of the victim, and remain mute.

Condemnation to Siberia, and the knout, are rare in the army. This punishment is commonly reserved for the greater criminals ; e. g., murderers, conspirators, or mutineers.

Thieves are commonly punished with five hundred blows with a rod ; and deserters have to run the gauntlet through three thousand men. The latter punishment, if carried out to the letter, would, in most cases, occasion death ; but there are commonly some more humane officers, who come to an understanding to mitigate the punishment, and order their companies secretly, to strike gently, especially when the delinquent is ready to drop. It is true, that a long time may elapse before he drops, for the victim's hands are held by two non-commissioned officers, who, at the same time, thrust the butt-end of their guns into his ribs ; whilst, immediately in front of him, soldiers walk with their bayonets pointed to his breast, to prevent him from moving too fast. As his cries might easily awaken the pity of the soldiers, who would then strike too softly, a drum is beaten during the execution ; so that you can only judge by the contortions of his face, of the sufferings of the victim, in advancing along his bloody path. Should the condemned at length sink, notwithstanding the support of the butt-ends of the guns, a surgeon comes up, to examine if he can really stand

it no longer, or if his fainting is shammed. The opinion of the doctor decides if he shall really continue his walk, or if he must be led to the hospital; and when his back is healed, he has to receive the rest of his blows. For they always lay great stress, in Russia, on the full amount being applied.

It might be supposed that, with such a punishment before them, few would be tempted to desert. Yet, desertion is frequent in the Caucasian army, and would be much more frequent, if the Russian deserters met with a better reception at the hands of the Circassian and Tchetschensian mountaineers. When we consider the mode of recruiting in vogue in the Russian army, we cannot be much surprised at the severity of the discipline, and of the punishments employed in it; and we shall easily perceive why no conscripts willingly follow the Russian flag. More than two-thirds of the conscripts are supplied by the serfs of the nobles; and as it is left to the latter to appoint those of their slaves for the army, whom they choose, it is natural that they should first get rid of the most lazy and unmannerly of their vassals, and those who pay the least yearly

obrok (yearly tribute of the serfs). Many Russians, who are not serfs, are condemned to be soldiers for their crimes. Thus, if a cabman at St. Petersburg, drive over a man through carelessness, he is made a soldier. A gipsy taken up as a vagrant, a Jew kidnapped as a smuggler, a Tartar detected in stealing, an employé who has plundered the public fund entrusted to him, an Armenian merchant who has been discovered cheating ; all these worthy people are clothed in the soldier's grey coat. The same crime that, in France, would prevent a man from bearing arms, and lead to a military functionary being cashiered, occasions a man's being condemned to serve in the army in Russia. It might be inferred from this, that punishments are less severe in Russia than in France, because in cases where, in the latter country, a man is dressed in the red costume of the Toulon galley slaves, they only clothe them in the honourable uniform of the army in Russia. But twenty-five years' service in this uniform, under Muscovite discipline, are no trifle ; and I can understand the cry of grief uttered by an Armenian mother, at Erivan, who, hearing that her son was con-

demned to be a soldier, exclaimed, "that she would rather follow him a corpse to the grave." It can be easily conceived, that an army thus recruited, cannot dispense with blows, and that the honourable treatment is impossible in Russia which is observed, for instance, in the Prussian army, in which young men of all conditions are called upon to serve, and where the coarser spirits are kept in check by those more refined.

Though most competent judges, who are well acquainted with the subject, are agreed on the necessity of corporal punishment in the Russian army, there is a great difference of opinion relating to its extension to the soldiers' wives. A great part of the Russian soldiers, especially in the Caucasus, are married. The women are exposed to the same punishment as their husbands, if they violate the regulations; *e. g.*, if they do not keep their houses clean enough. The younger and prettier soldiers' wives endeavour to avoid the infliction by showing favours to the officers, in which they are by no means sparing. At the same time, prudishness would generally be dangerous. Hence, there are very few examples in the

Caucasian camps, of a similar faithfulness to that shown by the serjeant's wife at Sebastopol. The husbands readily connive at their own dis-honour, for they find good intercessors in their young wives, who shield them commonly from blows.

Though the type of the Sclavonic face has generally a great resemblance everywhere, yet an experienced eye will readily detect the Little Russian from the Great Russian, in the ranks of the regiments; in like manner the Pole, and especially the Jew, can be easily distinguished among the other grey-coats. The number of Jewish soldiers in the Russian army increase every year, though many go over to the Greek Church, in the hope of thereby improving their lot. The drawing of recruits is enforced with the greatest severity among the Polish Jews, and in Southern Russia. The poor devils endure much suffering, from the sneers and jokes of their comrades, but they bear these, and other hardships, with exemplary patience. The Poles are more unbending, and desert to the mountains in great numbers, though they are forced to work hard as servants among the Circassians, or are sold as slaves in

Turkey. Though many of these Polish deserters have endured terrible hardships in their adventures, yet they will frequently repeat them. I once met in Turkey, among the wild tribe of the Lasians, a Pole, who told me that he had been twice seized as a deserter, had been forced to run the gauntlet twice, had received in all six thousand blows, and had yet ran away for the third time. His physical powers, however, had been permanently broken by this ill-treatment. Nevertheless, the Poles are lauded, even by the Russian officers, as good and intelligent soldiers, and a great proportion of the non-commissioned officers consist of them.

Many of those Polish nobles who, after the last revolution, were sent as common soldiers to the Caucasus, have risen to the rank of officers, after five or six years service in the ranks, through their exemplary conduct and tried bravery. These Polish officers of the Caucasian army, are distinguished for a more humane treatment of their subordinates, and for a peculiar amiability, which is inherent in, or is affected by, the Poles generally. The manners and character of the Poles appear especially adapted to make conquests in the

female heart, a fact established by experience in Russia, as well as in Germany and France. Most of the Polish officers and soldiers with whom I became acquainted in the Russian army, were serious, silent and melancholy men. Suicides are frequent among them. Dubois relates the case of a Pole who threw himself from the fortress of Gagra, and was dashed to pieces on the rocks. His motive was disgust with the Russian service. In a town of Circassia, I saw a Pole of striking manly beauty, who, as I was informed, exercised a special charm on the female heart, but notwithstanding his *bonnes fortunes*, remained always sunk in a gloomy, brooding reverie. His melancholy eyes seemed to speak the sentiment of a German poet:

This sorrowing heart, fair maiden, is oppressed
With wrongs so deep, it never can have rest
Until my country's freedom, and her fame
Are given back to Poland's sons again.

The Poles serving in the Caucasus, have retained the most lasting remembrance of their country and of the past, though clothed in Russian uniforms.

What struck me especially in the camps

and posts of the Russians in the Caucasus, was the silence and want of all campaigning life and barrack fun. Order, silence and monotony prevailed within, as well as outside the barracks and tents. I always felt saddened, till I became accustomed to this want of life. It is only in the Cossack stanitzas that you find a little more animation and merriment. These light troops constitute, in reality, a warlike people in themselves, and, as regards their organization and spirit, differ so widely from the rest of the Russian army, that I purpose to devote the following chapter to this subject. I could not avoid noticing the striking contrast between the jollity of the French bivouacs in Algeria, and the dismal Russian posts in the Caucasus, where you meet no trace of the mirth, the music and dancing, the puns, story-telling and frolic, that diversify the monotony of campaigning in North Africa. In the Caucasus, there is a total absence of the witty devices, the inventive, happy and ingenious spirit, and the thousand improvised entertainments of the intelligent French soldiery. At the same time, I grant that a civilian is not exposed to the banterings and frolic of the

French camp. Even vodka seldom makes the Russian soldier merry, and when reeling and staggering, he never forgets to respect his superiors. I have often seen drunken Russians at Jalta, staggering about with their fellows, snatch at their caps, when they met a man whose good clothing betrayed a Tschin.

Nevertheless, there are seasons when everything changes, in the most unaccountable manner in the camps of the Caucasus, and when the oppressive silence is broken, as it were, by a miracle, by an outburst of music, singing, and dancing. Even at Jalta, I had been struck by seeing the Russian soldiers, engaged in repairing the harbour, return home to quarters every night, singing in chorus. Had it not been for the dismal countenances of the men, this might have been mistaken for an expression of hilarity. But as I never saw these mustachios smile whilst singing, I inquired respecting the motives of this propensity to sing, recurring every evening, and I was told in reply, that there was an order for the men to sing after their work was finished. I have more than once seen men shouting with all their might in chorus, who a couple of hours

before, had been groaning and blubbering most lustily under a good thrashing.

I shall never forget the impression produced on me by a great review that I witnessed at Vladikaukas. It was on the 27th May, 1843, when the whole garrison marched forth amidst all the pomp and circumstance of war from this important fortress situated in a splendid country, at the very foot of the Caucasus. The day was cloudy and cool, the earth was covered with snow, and the finest peaks of the Caucasus were veiled in mist. Every grey coat carried on his back, a linen sack which appeared to be well filled. Shoulder to shoulder these brawny muscular men stood firm as a wall, and their broad snub noses, and sun-burnt faces stared from behind the flashing hedge of bayonets with one uniform vacant expression. At the word of command, all the soldiers lay down at full length on the snow, and remained lying on their cold bed whilst the music played, and the inspecting General Baldinin, a kind-hearted and jovial man, rode round and through the ranks. Presently, at the word of command, twenty singers stood up, a leader began to chaunt, and the remainder fell in, in a noisy chorus ; one of

them played an accompaniment during the performance, on a little fife that he drew from his pocket.

The Russian spectators were highly edified at the sight of this snowy bivouac, and the Tchetschensians who were present looked on during this singular entertainment with great interest, though a haughty contempt was easily traceable on their faces, which bore a great likeness to birds of prey. The Russian spectators respectfully pulled off their caps before the general, but the proud mountaineers raised not a hand in salutation. At length, the battalions arose from the snow at the word of their commander. After this, the singing choruses were formed on a large scale, some soldiers danced but remained in stiff array, for all had been most rigidly pre-ordained. This compulsory hilarity made no cheerful impression on me. But the faces of the men relaxed to an expression of real and genuine satisfaction when two great pitchers of brandy were brought; a good glass of the comfortable liquor being handed to each soldier. The review terminated amidst hurrahs delivered to order. The Russian military music is very fine. Drums

and trumpets rang loud through the mountains, a rattling peal, like the voice of the God of war awakening the echoes of the Caucasus. Sky and mountains unveiled at the blast of battle, and the mighty Caucasus stood forth from the clouds, wild and grim as if taking up the Russian challenge and answering the peal of their trumpets.

CHAPTER XI.

The Cossacks.

THE Tchernomorski Cossacks who inhabit the right bank of the Kouban, from the wastes of the Black Sea and that of Azoff, to very near the country where the Laba empties itself into the Kouban, are the descendants of the notorious Zaporogi Cossacks, to whom their present residence was assigned by a ukase of Empress Catharine on the 8th of April, 1783. At the time of their migration, they amounted to about 60,000 individuals. The plague which occurred in the year 1796, and the unhealthiness of the climate to which they were not yet accustomed, considerably diminished their number during the first period of their settlement. To this must be added the mur-

derous conflict with the Circassians. Since that time, the population has increased very little, and bears no proportion to the extensive territory it occupies. Their territory, which is intersected with marshes, is rich in luxuriant pastures, and very favourable to agriculture, but in other respects it is monotonous and dreary beyond description. The rough north storms from Siberia, opposed by no mountains, sweep over here during a great part of the year with frightful violence; the sudden and violent showers of rain in winter, and the over-flowing of the Kouban, increase the difficulties of intercourse between the Cossack stanitzas, whilst in summer, when there is little rain, the sun burns up the grass of the steppes, diminishes the pasture ground for the flocks, and changes wide tracks of country into a brown arid waste.

In addition to the deplorable monotony of the country which wearies the eye, the inhospitable nature of the climate, and the fevers; the inhabitants are exposed to all the miseries of war, and severe military service, and to the danger of being killed by a bold enemy in

sudden incursions, or at all events of being robbed of their property, wives, and children.

The Tchernomorski Cossacks set on foot ten regiments, each of which consists of one thousand men. After three years' service, the men lay down their lances on the domestic hearth, and seize again the scythe and the plough, and are relieved by other Cossacks, till their turn comes once more for serving. All their officers are native Cossacks, their Hetman is General Sawadofski, commanding at Ekaterinodar.

The Tchernomorski are strong, well-conditioned men, with regular, handsome features, remarkably like Hungarian peasants. They wear no whiskers, like the Cossack race, but much handsomer moustachios, which being very long, extend beyond their cheeks on both sides, and are kept in good order. They only wear their uniforms at reviews, and on holidays; otherwise, I saw most of the Tchernomorski on duty, dressed in coarse sheep-skin coats. The breeches were of coarse ticking, stuck into the boots, and the head covered with a Circassian cap. Their weapons consist

of a lance painted red, eight feet long, with a musket without a bayonet, which they sling across their back.

I have heard many exaggerated descriptions of the beauty of the Cossack women. I have sometimes remarked amongst the Cossack girls, very lovely figures, but this is rare, and on the whole, we cannot help wondering here, as well as in other parts of Russia, to meet so few pretty women, amidst such a powerful and handsome race of men. It is much easier to explain this amongst the Cossacks, than in the large Russian cities, for instance, in St. Petersburg. The young Cossack girls are early accustomed to hard, exhausting labour, and the rough northern storms which blow over their tender faces whilst ploughing, are as injurious to the preservation of beauty, as the hot sun of July, which they encounter during the time of harvest. Their dress, also, is not calculated to display their figure to the best advantage, nor do those fair Cossacks of the Black Sea know how to adorn themselves with finery and agreeable coquetry. This remark must only be applied generally; for there is no want of beautiful exceptions.

When I was in my little Cossack house at Taman, writing a description in my diary of the first impression which this country made on me, the wife of the officer with whom I was quartered, stepped into the room. She wore a cloth cloak trimmed with fur, from which drops of rain were falling, for the storm was fearfully wild without; her delicate little feet were enclosed in parti-coloured stockings, and from beneath the blue silken kerchief, which was wound about her head, peeped out a face of marvellous beauty. The light blue eyes, the delicate complexion, the pretty mouth, and especially the indescribably lovely expression of roguishness and cheerfulness which animated the beautiful features, together with the soft-toned voice with which she gave the salutation of 'Strastwuitje, sudar!' to the stranger guest with so much grace, made no small impression on me, and I was about to conclude my first sketch of the Cossack women with an enthusiastic panygeric on their beauty, when, most fortunately, I recollect that an Englishman, writing from a town in France, mentioned that all the women there had red hair, and were quarrelsome, just because, on

looking down from a postchaise, he saw a woman who had red hair, and was wrangling with her husband. I acted wisely in this respect, for I determined not to notice anything in my chapter respecting the fair sex amongst the Cossacks, until I had met with more specimens of them, during my travels through the country of the Cossacks. I have never met with any other face so beautiful as that of Maria K—ff, the wife of my host in Taman."

The Tchernomorski have not distinguished themselves in war against the Caucasian mountaineers, they are also less feared by the Circassians than the Cossacks of the Line, who are much more pugnacious, dexterous, and brave, than their neighbours. An inclination for a careless, dreamy, lazy life, is the ruling trait in the character of the latter, and the military of the remaining corps of the army in the Caucasus, often speak of these Cossacks with contempt.

The invasions of the Circassians succeed more easily with the Tchernomorski than with the vigilant Cossacks of the Line, who have acquired the cunning and dexterity of the mountaineers in warfare. I often observed the phlegmatic character of the Tchernomorski

Cossack, when I have entered a stanitza, or solitary post-house, where no sentries were stationed, and the Cossacks, at a distance from their weapons, were lazily dreaming on the grass, in the vicinity of an enemy who, almost weekly, carried on plundering expeditions against them. If it happen that any of those Cossacks are required for a service, say for escorting a convoy, they saddle their horses as sullenly as possible, and take up their red lance, yawning all the while. You see expressed in their sleek faces, the same character of mind as in Shakspeare's fat knight, when he was to march forth against Percy Hotspur.

These poor Tchernomorski do not owe the Empress Catherine many thanks for the magnificent present of extensive territory in such a country. They would doubtless gladly be again where once their sires lived, and near more peaceable neighbours than the mountaineers of the Caucasus.

During my journey, on the Kouban, I shared this wish with them, respecting myself. Each day I heard of plundering incursions; even in the stanitzas, it was said, that a man was not safe from the enemy's shot behind

the ditch. The nobles of the Tchernomorski, and the officers of various ranks, who dwell in Ekaterinodar on the Kouban, the chief town of the Cossacks, endeavour to console themselves by drink, intrigues, and gambling, for their banishment to this gloomy land. In all my travels through Europe, Africa, and Asia, I have never found so much filth in any place as in Ekaterinodar, where, even in the dry summer, wheels remain sticking in the streets ; and I never saw a more unrestrained life than is led in the chief town of the Tchernomorski Cossack.

At the village of Waroneschkaja, my Tchernomorski escort was relieved by the Cossacks of the Line. These wear the Circassian dress ; a coat of bright brown cloth, with a leatherne girdle round the hips, and with gay coloured lappets on both sides the breast, in which they stick the cartridges, blue breeches and Circassian fur cap. Instead of a lance, they have a sabre (schaschka), slightly curved towards the point ; a dagger (kinschal) a foot and a half long and two inches wide ; and a long pistol slung across the back. When these troops, to whom a Tchernomorski riding forward, had

brought my order for an escort, darted over the steppe, being deceived by their dress, I took them to be Circassians, and thought it was an attack.

As far as Stavropol, I journeyed always with a guard of Cossacks in the Circassian costume. From Stavropol to the country of the Terek, my escort consisted of Don and Oural Cossacks, amongst whom there were not such manly and handsome figures as amongst the Cossacks of the Line. Those who are acquainted with the nature of the land and the Circassian mode of attack, would place little confidence in the protection of such a band of horsemen which, even in the case of generals, does not exceed twenty-five men. The Circassians, who conceal themselves in the bushes and reeds along the way, seldom cross the Kouban with a less number than five hundred men. If the escort be composed of brave men, they will consider it their duty to shed their blood in defence of the traveller; but these men escape with difficulty death or imprisonment. In most cases, however, the escort wisely takes flight; and it is not wrong in so doing; for, by opposition, the amount of victims would be still greater without saving the traveller.

The only advantage which is gained by an escort over the Kouban for the security of the traveller, is this—that these Cossacks give you speedy intelligence of the appearance of the Circassians, when they leave their ambush. Thus you may possibly find time to cut the ropes of one of the horses, and dash away with them over the steppe. In this manner, escape is possible; but these cases are rare; for the Circassians rush out from their ambush with lightning speed, so that the traveller has scarcely time to mount the horse. I placed very little confidence in the protection of my escort, having heard from experienced men of the danger of travelling on the Kouban. Their company, however, afforded me in my solitude a good opportunity of a thorough insight into this remarkable body of cavalry.

At every six or eight versts my escort was changed; so that between Ekaterinodar and Vladikaukas, I was escorted by more than six hundred different Cossacks. Whilst my Russian postillion was driving the horses with the speed of an arrow over the steppes, the Cossacks dashed on in full chase before and beside the carriage, and one of them rode on still faster to

prepare the new escort at the next post-house, so that the journey might not be at all delayed. Still wilder and more picturesque forms met my eye, as I advanced, and the sight of them made the monotonous country somewhat less wearisome to me.

The Cossacks of the Caucasian Line, according to the information of Monsieur de Fonton, an officer in attendance on Prince Paskewitch, form a military colony of 48,000 men, on the banks of the rivers Kouban and Terek. They set on foot 6092 serviceable troopers. A like number of troops, not in ordinary service, but who are occupied in cultivating the land, remain always ready on an emergency, to obey the summons of the Commander-general.

These Cossacks possess considerable wealth in cattle, viz: 26,000 horses, 96,000 head of horned cattle, and 188,000 sheep. The Cossacks of the Line have also to carry on petty warfare against the mountaineers. They dwell in large villages, (stanitzas) whose streets are broad and regular, as in all Russian towns. The small houses are built of reed-posts and clay. In the centre of the place stands a small stone church with a tower and turret, ornamented and

cheerful looking, the walls covered with white, and the roof and turret of a bright green colour. Nearly all the villages have no other fortification, than a thick hedge of prickly branches, which are difficult to climb over, but very easily to be set on fire; sometimes the villages are surrounded by a ditch. Between the various stanitzas, you meet outposts, at all points, where the crossing over the Kouban is most easy of execution. Little sentry-boxes are perched on four poles, looking like dove-cots, and are reached by a ladder. The Cossack sentry sits immovable upon his airy throne, his sharp spying eyes constantly directed towards the bank of the stream. When the watch happens to see a troop of Circassians swimming across the river, he takes some reeds or straw, which is found by the side of every post-house, sets it alight, and mounting his horse, dashes to the next village or fort, (*krepost*). There the alarm signal has been already remarked, and a cannon shot has called the village Cossacks to arms. All those who are in the stanitzas, spring on their horses, and hasten to the Kouban to seek out the enemy, and cut off his retreat. If the Circassians

observe that the men in the stanitzas have been informed of their crossing the Kouban, they usually return, as in that case, they know that an attack on the village would cause more loss of blood, than gain of booty, for many of the stanitzas have small garrisons of Russian infantry of the line, who, whilst the Cossacks surround the enemy from without, fire upon him behind the hedge of thorns, and thus they often inflict considerable loss on the Circassians. Sometimes, however, the latter manage to cross the Kouban during the night, with stillness and caution, so that the scouts do not perceive it, and then some village is usually selected, destroyed, and thoroughly plundered, before a larger body of Cossacks is able to hasten to their relief. The attacked stanitza is then set on fire, and the red flames give a light, which discovers the retreat of the mountaineers, who, shouting with joy over their booty, and the accomplishment of their bloody purpose, carry off on their horses the women and children of the Cossacks to their souls, and stick the heads of their slaughtered enemies on the points of their sabres.

Sometimes, the desire for gaining more

heads and prisoners, detains the Circassians too long in the captured stanitza, and they find their retreat cut off by a superior number of Cossacks. In such cases, they leave both booty and prisoners behind, fly over the steppes like the hurricane, and endeavour to cross over by another way. It is then a chase for life or death. The Circassians, screaming like jackalls, sweep, on their long-maned horses, over the boundless plain, and behind them come the Cossacks, shouting their hurrahs, and thirsting for revenge for the death of their wives and little ones. The Circassians endeavour, through a real or pretended flight, either to secure a retreat in another direction, or at least to entice the Cossacks away from their infantry and field artillery. If they succeed, a troop of the most determined Circassians, suddenly wheel about their horses, throw themselves upon the most impetuous pursuers, strike them down from the saddle, and then whilst the distant and dispersed Cossacks and Circassians hasten to the succour of their own people, begins the most picturesque cavalry *mélée* that can be imagined. Sabres glitter and clink one against the other,

unseated riders continue their desperate fight on foot, and thrust the long, two-edged kinschal into their opponent's breast. Those who are afraid of engaging in close combat with their swords, discharge at some distance their guns and pistols, and gallop up if the enemy be struck down from his saddle, in order to give the finishing blow with their schaschka to him, whom in the conflict they dared not meet face to face. With equal equipments, equally good horses, and an almost equal skill in fighting, the issue of a struggle between the Circassians and Cossacks of the Line is doubtful, and generally depends upon the superiority of numbers of one or other of the parties. But the clumsy Don and Tchernomorski Cossacks, who are armed with lances, and are little exercised in war, are no match for the Circassian cavalry in such conflicts. There has been much dispute respecting the advantage and disadvantage of the lance as a cavalry weapon. Distinguished military authorities, amongst others, Marshal Marmont, prefer the lance, to the sword.

At the battle of Dresden, the Duke of Ragusa relates that the Austrian infantry were repeat-

edly attacked by the French Cuirassiers, but that they repelled all their attacks, though their muskets were rendered unserviceable by the rain. This infantry was only overcome when fifty Lancers from the escort of General Latour-Maubourg's charged, and made openings in the ranks of the Austrians, and facilitated the triumph of the Cuirassiers. Marmont asserts that the matter would have been settled at once, if the Cuirassiers had been provided with the formidable lance. In an engagement of serried masses, the lance is, most certainly, a fearful, irresistible weapon; but in single combat, the lance is at a disadvantage against a trooper experienced in the use of his sword. This has been discovered in Russia, where, generally speaking, the lance is such a favourite cavalry weapon, and consequently some of the Caucasian Cossacks are armed with sword and dagger. The Circassians are careful not to charge a regiment of Don Cossacks drawn up in line, where they see long rows of lances staring at them. But in a wild cavalry scuffle, such as we have often seen on the Caucasian line, where each one selects his opponent, the Don Cossack, if the first rush with his lance do not succeed, which it seldom

does, is generally a lost man. The Caucasian skilfully avoids the steel point, or parries the thrust, and closing with his opponent, whose lance, after the failure of the thrust, has become a useless pole, he strikes him out of the saddle with a vigorous blow of the sabre. The victory is commonly decided before the slow, and heavy infantry can hurry up with their long coats and field artillery. The rest of the mountaineers swim back over the Kouban, either rejoicing or burning for revenge, whilst the cannon which have come up too late, thunder in vain in their rear.

END OF VOL I.

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GEORGIA AND KOORDISTAN;

WITH

SKETCHES OF THE COSSACKS AND THE CAUCASUS.

FROM THE GERMAN OF

D R. MORITZ WAGNER.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE COSSACKS

AND

THE CAUCASUS.

PART I.

CHAPTER XII.

The Cossacks—(*continued*).

AMONGST the mass of the Cossacks, three distinct physiognomies can be detected. First, the genuine Russian, with a broad, Sclavonic countenance, a snub nose, and very light brown beard. Secondly, the nobler Cossack type, proceeding from a strong mixture of the Sclavonic race with the Tartar and Circassian tribes, having the nose more curved, approaching the aquiline nose of the Caucasian, the face more oval and delicate, the eyes more animated, the beard not so light as with the Great Russians, and a character of face which

is by far the most common amongst the Cossack population of the Line. And, thirdly, the genuine Circassian type, which is presented in a small section of these Cossacks. These scattered individuals, of unmixed Caucasian blood, strike you immediately, among the remaining masses of those troopers, by their coal-black beards, their fiery eyes, long faces of very energetic expression, and their spare make. The bearing, attitude, and movements of these descendants of genuine Circassians, are decidedly more refined and nobler than those of the more robust, stiff, and plump Sclavonians.

In a religious point of view, these Sclavonians are inclined to the sects which are widely spread amongst the Little Russians. For the entertainment of their foreign guests, they have particular vessels, out of which, like the intolerant Schiites in Persia, they never eat food themselves, and thus they consider themselves more pious and righteous than their brethren of the north. I was very much pleased with the gaiety and vivacity of the children, which I had not observed in other Russian villages. The young Cossacks are fine lads, with awakened, sensible, and open-

hearted countenances. Most of them wear nothing but a shirt, which is fastened with a narrow girdle round the waist, trousers of the coarsest linen cloth, and a kind of sandal ; but many go bare-footed. From amongst those Cossack children, who grow up amidst danger and conflict, proceed the best soldiers of the Russian Caucasian army, worthy opponents of the contentious Tschetschensians and Circassians.

The Cossack population settled on the banks of the Kouban and Terek, were not sufficient to ward off the attacks of the mountaineers, for the purpose of yielding escorts for military convoys and travellers, as well as for many other services, in which these light cavalry in the Russian armies can be employed, and they were obliged to have recourse to the large Cossack population on the Don.

Ten regiments of Don Cossacks, each consisting of one thousand men, are required to remain in service amongst the Caucasus for three years, and are then replaced by others. In recent times, these Cossacks have received considerable reinforcements. It was easy to foresee that the Don Cossacks would not willingly engage

in a war, where, independently of great dangers, so little booty could be made. The government would gladly have transported a part of the population from the Don to the Terek, and would have forced these people to be brave like the Caucasian Cossacks, by exposing their families and property to the attacks of the mountaineers. But it appears that they are careful not to alienate this numerous and warlike cavalry population, who, though very faithful to the Emperor, and obedient to the orders of government, are still not quite so patient as the race of the Great Russians. Hence the government was cautious, it appears, not to alienate them, by removing them from their tranquil and fruitful homes, to the plains at the foot of the Caucasus; to fevers, wars, and plundering incursions; it remains satisfied with employing these Cossacks for common military service. Accordingly, the lancers of the Don and Oural do not fight, like the Tchernomorski and the Cossacks of the Line, against the Caucasians for their wives and children; they leave their domestic hearth on the Don with the greatest unwillingness, nor do they bring with them any enthusiasm or thirst

for revenge, on account of their families murdered or imprisoned in the Caucasian war. They consider their service there as an oppressive burthen. They count every day of the three years, during which they have to tarry in sight of the snowy summits of the Caucasus, longing for their homes and their beloved wives, and they often show themselves helpless novices in mountain warfare. We are not a little astonished when we become more familiarly acquainted with the spirit of these troops, that they should be the same warriors, (or, at least, descendants of the same,) who awakened such terror in the veterans of Napoleon, in the cold bivouacs in Russia.

The dislike which the Don Cossacks have to the Caucasian war, can be explained by several reasons, and it would be very erroneous for any one to accuse these troopers of cowardice, because they regret exchanging their peaceful homes for the place of combat in the Caucasus. In the last Russian campaigns against the Persians and Turks, the Don Cossacks showed, like all Russian soldiers, the utmost courage. A Russian officer once expressed himself thus: "Whoever has seen our soldiers fight at Erivan, Achalzich, and

Baiburt, would scarcely believe that they are the same men as those on our expeditions against the tribes of the Caucasus. Against the Persians and Turks, all fought with impetuosity and courage ; even the wounded Cossacks would not get off their horses. With loud shouts, they all galloped cheering into the smoke of battle. But in these fearful mountain wars, as soon as an expedition is prepared, many declare themselves sick, who are not so. If one of our soldiers should be wounded on the field of battle, twenty, perhaps, will immediately press round to carry him to the rear, in order to get out of the fight along with him. Lamentable war!"

It is well known that the Don Cossacks are very skilful riders, and sit firmly in the saddle ; but the Cossacks of the Line excel them in horsemanship. The great military review which took place at Tiflis, on the 7th of May, 1843, gave me a proof of this.

On the large meadow of the German colony of New Tiflis, Cossacks, Tartars and Georgians, executed before the commander in chief of the army, General Neidhardt, feats of horsemanship and evolutions. I never saw

finer cavalry manœuvres. A picked body of Tartars and Georgians, in the magnificent national costume, the Cossacks of the Line in Caucasian coats embroidered with silver, and Lancers of the Don, in their blue holiday uniforms, exercised their horses in the wildest chace, and brandishing the schaschka, throwing the lances and firing their pistols and muskets, went through the most beautiful mock fights imaginable. Everything was imitated with the most perfect exactness, even to the battle cry of the Circassians, only of course no blood was shed. Those who had never been on an expedition, gained at least an idea of the manner in which an engagement is managed on the Kouban. On the other side of the Caucasus, they are very fond of cavalry shows of this sort; hence, on that day all the inhabitants of Tiflis were abroad, and at the sight of the prancing steeds, and at the clashing of weapons, the countenances of the beautiful Georgians, usually so cold and vacant, acquired an animated expression. The Cossacks of the Line kept firmly in their saddles during the race, but five or six of the Dons were unhorsed. Envy and jealousy reign among the various

corps of the Cossacks, just as they do between different branches of the service. During my second visit to the Caucasus, I remained some days at Ananur on the Aragui, where a division of the Oural Cossacks were garrisoned.

One evening, I observed a number of Cossacks rushing to the brink, they pointed with their finger to the bed of the river, where I saw a man struggling in the water, and then heard some one say, laughing: "the fellow will certainly be drowned: but he is only a Don Cossack." "What!" indignantly cried a beautiful and slender Georgian, who stood near, "he is nevertheless your countryman and comrade, he is a Cossack like yourself; would you let him sink, because he is from the Don instead of the Oural?" The beautiful form of the Georgian, whose countenance glowed with anger, appeared to great advantage by the side of the shaggy, bearded, uncouth Oural Cossacks. After a long delay, some of them rode into the river and dragged the man out of the water. To my horror, I then first discovered that the half-drowned man was

one of the Cossacks who served me as attendant during my journey.

Amongst the Tchernomorski and Cossacks of the Line, I spent but little time ; but with the Don Cossacks I had a tolerably long intercourse. They were my constant escort in the Alps of Ossetia and in Trans-Caucasia and Armenia, and their black lances guarded my tent even on the top of Ararat, from which the eye wanders over three monarchies, over a powerful, youthful and aspiring monarchy, and two ancient and expiring ones. The Don Cossacks were also my teachers of the Russian language.

During my residence in the Crimea, I diligently studied the Russian grammar, but on a practical application of what I had learnt, I was commonly not understood ; for the German finds the true pronunciation of a Sclavonic word very difficult. But through long and constant intercourse, with my Cossack attendants, ear and tongue became accustomed to the foreign tones, and by daily practice, I was at last pretty well understood by the people. Were I to give my own personal judgment respecting the character of the

Cossacks, gained during my residence with them, the verdict would not be favourable. My own peculiar view, coincides tolerably with that of other unprejudiced and clear sighted men, who have had nearer and longer opportunities of observing the people on the Don, than I have had.

The Cossacks are full of cunning, and dissimulation towards persons of rank, with whom they are connected as servants, escorts, or in any subordinate condition. Their submissive, officious demeanour, is often, perhaps, mistaken for good nature. We are astonished on a longer acquaintance with them, however, to observe how great the art of cunning and dissimulation is, amongst a people, in other respects, so uncultivated. Amongst themselves, the Don Cossacks are very friendly, courteous, and talkative, but always ready to take advantage of their countryman and comrade, and even to rob him. The propensity for theft appears to be a universal vice of the Cossacks; they practice it boldly and openly in a foreign land, amongst themselves, secretly and cunningly.

A foreign traveller, who receives an escort of Cossacks, from the Russian government

should be carefully warned on this score. In vain will he hope by good treatment or generosity, to awaken any gratitude, in the heart of such attendants, or to stimulate them to any honourable conduct, towards their master. I could impart much information upon this subject, from my own experience, but for many reasons, I prefer to be silent. I will only venture to relate one striking case. One day as I was preparing for a journey into the country, where plundering incursions were much to be feared, a Cossack of my escort gave into my charge, a sum of money, which, for his circumstances was very considerable. I was anxious to discover how the man became possessed of it. But since I knew the cunning, degraded character of these people, I had no hope of hearing the truth from himself, and I therefore resolved to draw the information adroitly from one of his comrades.

We were once encamped in a wood, and roasting some game by a fire ; I seated myself near a Cossack, who was in a very happy state of mind, after a good draught of vodka. I first questioned him about the barrack service, pay, and so forth ; and heard the usual complaint,

that a Cossack could not live on the niggardly crown pay. "But," I interrupted him, "Iwan, how is it possible for you to keep your purse always full? how in all the world did your comrade happen to have such a sum of money as that which he gave me to keep for him?"

"That came," said he quite dryly, "from stealing oxen. My comrade was fortunate enough to carry off five head of cattle; they were not lean kine either."

"But from whom did he take the cattle?"

"They were Georgians—stupid peasants," answered the Cossack, with a look of contempt.

"And you feel no qualms of conscience on this score? stealing is scandalous. And what do your officers say, if the theft is discovered."

"The Cossack needs to steal in a foreign land. Every one does when there is an opportunity. We are compelled to steal, because we can't live on our pay. Our officers see well what is going on, but they wink at it. And, no one is foolish enough to let himself be caught in the act, or he will get stripes for it."

It appears that, with the Cossacks, as with

the Spartans of old—skilful thieves pass scot free, whilst clumsy thieves get a sound thrashing. The people on the other side the Caucasus are greatly to be pitied, especially in those parts which are so distant from Tiflis as not to be able to bring their complaints to the noble and severe commander-in-chief residing there. One of the persecuted sect of Malokani emigrants, settled at Aekta, not far from Gobtchaisen, in despair at the thieving of the Cossacks, went to Tiflis, in order to complain; but the Governor of the circle of Pipis, who feared a rebuke from the Governor-General, sent some Cossacks after him, who overtook him on the road, and beat him till he was almost lame. The Malokani kept his bed for a month, and the complaint fell to the ground. “The people are content; they love their chiefs; for no complaints ever reach us,” observed a distinguished officer on the other side of the Caucasus, to me one day.

In the Caucasian war, and even in the last campaign against Persia and the Turks, the plunder-loving Cossacks have been able to carry home very little compared with what they did from France and Germany. The women of the Don lament loudly over it, and heartily wish

that war would be again carried on in richer countries, in which so much more is to be gained than amongst the poor Tschetschensians, where no better booty is to be found than Trans-Caucasian oxen. The church in Novo-Tscherkask, the chief town of the Don Cossacks, is full of incredible treasures. The traveller sees there pictures of saints framed in gold, and ornamented with diamonds, and altar vessels set in gold of untold value. All this was supplied by the pious Cossacks, who, in the year 1815, returned to their homes laden with spoil from Germany and France. No Russian province contains so much gold as the land of the Cossacks, and not a few ducats, with the impression of German sovereigns are found among them. Klaproth relates that many distinguished widows have in their houses at Novo-Tscherkask pots quite full of ducats, which have descended from father to son untouched, and even uncounted. Many of the Cossacks have brought from their campaigns, gold ornaments for their wives and daughters ; and the Cossack women carry considerable riches on their heads in pearls and precious stones, and necklaces composed of ducats. A beautiful young Russian belonging

to the higher class of society, who had been brought up on her father's property on the Don, once described to a travelling German, who was staying on the coast of the Crimea, with the most agreeable animation, the handsome dress and fashion of the young maids on the Don ; and, whilst she was speaking, she herself put on one of the Cossack head-dresses, which wonderfully adorned the pretty head.

“ Ah !” said the beautiful girl, describing the dress, “ my people appear to have fared very well in your country, and what a number of pretty things they would bring back, if they were to visit Germany as friends instead of enemies.”

“ Young Lady,” replied the traveller, “ we Germans are so engrossed with our philosophy and poetry, that we have no time to think of the possibility of a visit from such guests, or to make preparations for a suitable reception of them. Whilst the Russians have built a magnificent fleet on the Baltic Sea; of which a score or two years ago, not one plank existed, we write a great many verses on our German fleet. Poets will celebrate its deeds of future heroism, and introduce by name those ships

which have taken part in the sea fights, but of which, not a single beam has yet been laid—and whilst in Russia, they attain the exact information respecting all that transpires in the neighbouring countries, the German expresses with good-natured gravity, his moral ideas concerning the inconceivable indiscretion of foreigners, who have dared to make disclosures about the condition of Russia."

Those broad steppe lands, through which the Don flows, and where each man is born a soldier, are a possession of immense value to Russia. Nothing is required there, but the voice of one man to cause 100,000 warlike lancers on the Don and Oural to leap into the saddle. All military authorities have admitted the uncommon usefulness of so large a body of cavalry. Cossacks may be employed in a thousand ways, both in small and great wars, either to protect their own convoys, or to attack those of the enemy, as videttes, and mounted messengers, or as scouts in pursuit of a defeated enemy. Even in order of battle, the impetuous charge of their lances has, on many occasions, made a fearful impression. An army with Cossacks is secure against all surprisals, whilst the enemy has no

rest from their worrying. Their lances are of infinite value to Russia, because they supply many deficiencies of the Russian soldiers in military qualities. They contribute to the army, elasticity, rapidity, one of the few warlike qualities, which is wanting to the robust, brawny, massively built, Great Russian, who, moreover, in a rapid movement is impeded by an inconvenient dress.

It is inconceivable how men have endeavoured to raise any doubt, at this time of day, respecting the value of the Russian soldiers in the field, and the formidable nature of the Russian army. All those who read Modern History, who know the particulars of the battles which the Russian armies have fought against the greatest Generals during the last century, Charles XII, Frederick II, and Napoleon ;—all such men ought not to require a warning respecting the power of Russia, to make them feel very anxious about the threatening and rapid increase, both of the population and military force of that empire. The Russians fought the most fiercely amongst all the enemies of Prussia, in the seven years' war. This was allowed by Frederick II himself, and it was

a fortunate thing for him, that the Russians, at that time, had no motive to press the war vigorously. Napoleon, who in a short campaign destroyed the Prussian military force, which was commanded by Generals of the school of the Great Frederick, found at Eylau, a resistance on the part of the Russians, which this spoiled child of victory had never before met with.

This dreadful and murderous battle at Eylau, between armies of almost equal numerical strength, is a very remarkable event in military history. It proves that all enthusiasm, and military ambition, imbuing an army, from the General to the drummer, can accomplish very little—against another army, whose soldiers know nothing of that inspiring quality, but instead of having it, are schooled in the severest discipline, and are accustomed to be obedient even unto death. In France especially, great stress has been laid on the *morale*, or enthusiasm of armies; but the battle of Eylau is one amongst many proofs, that soldiers of strong physical make, who stand firm on the field of battle, to the last drop of their blood, have no cause to fear adversaries who, from the love of glory, patriotism, or whatever

we may call the moral motive of bravery, are impelled to the encounter. The brawny, well-flogged Russian soldiers, consisting exclusively of peasantry, stood firm and cool against the celebrated guard of the French Emperor, which consisted almost entirely of veterans, of whom most were decorated with the Cross of the Legion of Honour, and although the genius of Napoleon conducted them, still, the battle at Eylau remained undecided; indeed, the victory would have probably terminated against the French, if the Russian Commander-in-chief had thought fit to continue the battle on the following day.

The Russians, also, deserve the *honour* of having fought at Borodino, the bloodiest battle of modern times. Whether we read those terrible scenes, where the whole field was covered with dead bodies, according to the descriptions of Ségur, the Frenchman, or of the Russian, Michailowski Danilewski, we shall learn to esteem the heroic firmness of the Russians, who were at that time numerically weaker, as well as the bravery of Napoleon's warriors. I think, we rather overrate the enthusiasm of soldiers, as a means of victory; and are in

error, if we fear the Russian military powerless, because it does not possess the so-called moral power. Modern strategy, in which the movements and evolutions chiefly depend on the ingenious co-operation of infantry, cavalry, and artillery, and on regular, rapid marches, has converted soldiers into links in a great machine; and the more pliant and manageable these links are, in the hands of the master who conducts the management of the machine, the surer he is of the result. The fiery and personal bravery of soldiers, which is not always restrained within the bounds of discipline, is oftentimes more an impediment and obstruction, than an assistance to the General. I grant that, in the case of the officers, moral courage should never be wanting, but we must allow that the Russian officers are not behind those of any other armies in ambition and thirst for promotion. It is incredible how this ambition in Russia is awakened, stimulated, and goaded on, by a hundred means. In no other army are rewards so lavishly bestowed on officers who have distinguished themselves in the field. There are all possible kinds of medals and marks of

honour, for "good service;" the Cross and Star of St. George, Stanislaus, Vladimir, Andrew, Anna, and other holy orders, sometimes decorated with crowns, and at other times with diamonds; special decorations by epaulettes and uniforms, &c.

I was once in a distinguished society, which consisted chiefly of military of the Caucasian army. As I found it rather tedious, I had the patience to count up all the orders and badges of honour of the company; and I found that on the breasts of thirty-five military guests, there glittered more than two hundred stars and crosses; many of the coats of Generals had more orders than buttons. As is commonly the case, ambition, through the grant of an outward mark of distinction, will be more stimulated than satisfied. He who wears a medal in Russia, uses every means to become a Knight of the Cross; and then, being adorned with the Cross, he thirsts after the Star, in order to gain which, he will make the greatest sacrifice; great stress is laid, even by the Nogay Tartars with Mogul faces, on the fact of a man having an order, and the Koordish

chieftain, Ali Beg, at Ararat, asked me to what Tchin I belonged.

Those who have been acquainted with the military organization and power of Russia in former times, and have compared them with the present, must confess that it has infinitely gained under the highly active and powerful government of the late Emperor. His unusual orderly activity and foresight for the interests of the army, has imbued the Russian government, even to the farthest frontiers. Not only in St. Petersburgh do we learn to admire it, when we see the magnificent guard of 50,000 men march out to review; but it appears, perhaps, in a more striking light in New Russia, where, at the last great military spectacle at Wosnessensk, three hundred and fifty cavalry squadrons manœuvred before the Emperor.

Quietly, but with the power of the giant, the strength of Russia increases and grows on the shores of the Black Sea; and whilst at Nicolajeff and Sevastopol,* great military fortresses are raised, the nomadic Nogays are settled in

* This was written before its fall.—*Translator.*

fixed dwelling-places, and the wandering gypsies of the Crimea dressed in a uniform.

Indeed, it is a strange spectacle to see Armenians and Jews all standing in rank and file, dressed in grey coats, by the side of great Russians and gypsies, the former being generally so averse to military service.

The dirty gypsy with his lank hair, who has always been accustomed of old to a restless life, dwelling in holes, ragged, and covered with vermin, he whose great grandfather must have been a vagabond, must have thought it a dream, when he saw one day a Russian sergeant enter his hole, and found himself enrolled as a recruit. The dirty savage fellow must put aside his rags, wash himself for the first time in his life, put on unpatched trowsers, and be dressed in a splendid well buttoned green parade uniform. He, who had been accustomed from childhood to the wild freedom and independance of a wandering life, must be roused from his sleep in the barracks by the beat of the drum, polish his boots, and clean his musket; must march out well brushed and trimmed for muster, ready at the word of command "to right about." All this

must appear very strange to these dwellers in caverns, and they would have much preferred living with the vermin and eating roasted rats and hedge-hogs. At first, he behaves somewhat morosely in the service, but there are always means of converting him soon into an obedient soldier, and now we see the brawny gypsy with shining buttons, and with stiff upright carriage, standing to arms like the rest. It is almost miraculous, what Russian discipline can effect ; the Tartars of the Crimea, those terrible rovers who “ fly like the wind,” and who, in former times, carried devastation into the very heart of the Russian empire, are now subdued under the Russian sceptre, a quiet, tamed, humiliated people. Their present condition will not long continue ; for it will soon be their turn to submit to the conscription. They will have to accommodate themselves to it like the other populations, because it is not possible for them to emigrate ; indeed, they could not seek refuge in the Prussian dominions like the Polish Jews. At the next serious war with a great European power, the Tartar will spur on his horse against the enemy of Russia, by the side of the Cossack, whose enemy he has been for ages.

On observing the powerful Russian empire, such as it is now, it is less the conquest of such an immense extent of territory, than its maintenance, and its speedy Russification which astōnish us. The Cossacks have afforded the most important assistance in this matter. Without them, it would have been scarcely possible for the Russians to have maintained their Trans-Caucasian provinces, as they left independent mountaineers in their rear. The Circassians and Tschetschensians, with all their bravery, have not been able to check the victorious flight of the double eagle, nor to hinder the Russians from planting, as conquerors, their waving banners as far as the banks of the bridge-destroying Araxes. The secret of the cohesion of such immense regions and wastes peopled by such multifarious tribes, as are in the Russian empire, and the problem of this gigantic machine obeying the impulse of a single will, as we see in Russia, may be in a great measure solved by the character of the Cossacks.

CHAPTER XIII.

Scenes of Caucasian Warfare.

1. THE STORMING OF AKULCHO.

NATURE has prepared a rocky '*fastness of freedom*' on the rocks of the Caucasus, over which the Russian eagle has often winged its flight for above forty years, but which it has never succeeded in bringing into subjection to its claws. Save the two passes that lead to Trans-Caucasia, and the scattered kreposts on the Black Sea, and along the line of the Terek and Kouban, the Russians have only made effectual lodgments in very few parts of the mountains. Even Christian Ossetia, is only nominally subject to the Czar, and the small number of Russian functionaries, who

have settled among this Alpine people, possess only a very slight authority, as is proved by the recent insurrection, which was only quelled by the prudent measures of the commander-in-chief at Tiflis. If the Russian looks with complacent confidence at the forts and entrenched camps that rise in continually increasing numbers, on the flanks of the mountains, the Tschetschensian on the other hand, points with a scoff of defiance at his icy mountains, like the mason's apprentice, addressing the gaoler of Uri :

“ Let's see, how many mole-hills such as this
It would require, piled upon each other
To form a mountain like the least in Uri.”

Russian columns have repeatedly penetrated amongst the Caucasian mountains, and have stormed the lairs of the Tschetschensians with a heavy loss. But they never felt any inclination to install themselves in these rocky nests, instead of the mountaineers, and hence very little advantage was derived from the sacrifice of so many lives in the capture of Himri, Hermentschuk and Akulcho. A handful of heroic fanatics were put to death, a

few stone huts were destroyed, and then they retired to their kreposts in the plain, leaving the Tschetschensians to re-occupy their rocky nests at their pleasure, and to rebuild their stony huts at their leisure.

The expedition of General Grabbe against Akulcho, in the spring of 1839, was projected more for the purpose of the moral effect produced by the conquest of this fastness, that was held to be invincible by the mountaineers, than for the sake of any positive advantage to be derived from it by the Russians. The General can never have proposed to leave a garrison behind him there. But it was hoped that the Tschetschensians would be disposed to come to terms, and submit, when they found that not a single corner or retreat in their country was safe from the attacks of their enemies. General Grabbe was confident that the chief Schamyl, like his predecessor, Chasi-Mullah, would fall into the hands of the Russians, dead or alive; on this occasion, and that the resistance of the Tschetschensians would cease, at least, for a long time, with the loss of their leader. At the end of May, 1839, the Russian troops marched out of

Temir-Chantschura and other camps, united on the Koissu, and the column advanced to Akulcho, a distance of sixty versts, along the river, almost without meeting any resistance. It was a difficult matter to draw along the artillery in many places, but the perseverance of the Russian soldiers ultimately triumphed over every difficulty, and after a few fatiguing days' march, they reached the foot of the rock, to which Schamyl had retired with a faithful band, awaiting the Russians with a firm foot.

Akulcho is singularly situated. The Koissu, which makes a great bend at this spot, almost encompasses the mountain with its raging current, leaving only one narrow access to the village by a ledge of rocks. Accordingly, the position of Akulcho is almost insulated, and nature has opposed fearful obstacles to the advance of an assailant. I have seen a picture of this deserted fortress in the Caucasus. The conical form of the rocks, which hang over the Koissu in that district, would, if this picture be correct, lead one to infer the existence of a trachyte formation, as in the loftiest chain of the Caucasus. The Russian officers, who

related to me the siege of Akulcho, assured me, on the other hand, that the rocks there are composed of a rather porous sandstone, an opinion that is partially substantiated by the fact of the rocks of Akulcho being pierced in many places with artificial caverns, like the sandstone mountains of Gori. A hard, volcanic trachyte would have offered too much resistance for this tunnelling. The mountain of Akulcho has three natural terraces, which are only reached by means of one small path, whose approaches had been fortified and defended by about five hundred Tschetschensians. Grabbe did not suffer himself to be deterred from his plan by the difficulty of the ground. The Russian column encamped on both banks of the Koissu, mortars and cannon were planted, and after two days labour, the Russian artillery thundered merrily against the rocky nest, whose defenders were only able to reply to the bomb-shells by a shower of bullets. The environs of Akulcho are very picturesque, and an admirer of nature's beauties would have been richly rewarded by a residence there during the three months siege. Lovely bowers of beech trees and oaks adorn the northern

declivity of the Caucasus. Near Akulcho, the eye was delighted both with the verdant decoration of the forests, and the sight of the grey precipices, towering aloft in rugged and savage grandeur ; to this must be added the roar of an impetuous and magnificent mountain torrent, whose waves danced in careless delight over the rocks, whilst many a fallen Russian or Tschetschensian discoloured the foaming current with his blood. The Russian general hoped to force the defenders to surrender by the operation of his artillery. Bombs, cannon-balls and congreve-rockets poured upon the rocks every day, destroying the entrenchments, and the stone huts, but inflicting little injury on the defenders themselves, as they had retired into the excavations, where the bombs were unable to reach them.

A merry mood prevailed in the Russian bivouac during the first weeks. There were no exhausting marches to be made, and the men were pleasantly quartered under the beautiful, fragrant canopy of the trees. There was no dearth of provisions, nor even of wood, to boil their soup, and warm their limbs at night. There was, moreover, plenty of vodka to gladden

the stomach and the heart ; the Cossack sang his lay by the fire, possibly thinking of his maid on the Don ; and the grey coats filled up the pauses between the reports of the guns and the roll of the drums with their semi-religious, semi-warlike chorus chaunts.

Yet this gaiety, which was possibly only put on, and which animated the Russian soldiers on their first arrival at Akulcho, was many times disturbed by a well-directed shot, which would suddenly bowl over one of the singers in the midst of his drinking or singing companions.

Hereupon, the spectators would piously make the sign of the cross, and the song would die on their lips, till the Captain would exclaim, angrily : " What is the matter ? Will you sing on ? " And then the air would burst forth anew with all the strength of their lungs. The Tschetschensians expended very little powder, compared with the besiegers, but their shots were well aimed, and their pieces carried a long way. The Russians defended themselves as well as they could against these invisible shots ; one part of the column encamped at some distance, where it was beyond musket shot ; and those who were posted nearer to the rocks were

generally protected by earth-bags, bushes, or blocks of rock. Nevertheless, it was not always in their power to protect themselves; and all imprudent men who dared to show themselves, were immediately hailed by a bullet whistling in their ears. The besiegers were occasionally astonished by another visitor, beside a well-aimed bullet.

From the beginning, the belief seemed generally prevalent, amongst the besieged, that the Russians would not retire before they had taken the stronghold by storm or famine. Consequently, they regarded themselves as a band devoted to death for their faith, and were resolved, by fighting to the last extremity, to shed as much blood as possible. So great was the wild enthusiasm of the defenders, who consisted chiefly of Murids, that many were unwilling to await the assault of the Russians, and dashed down the rock into the heart of the enemy, with the schaschka in their right hand, a pistol in their left, and the kinschal between their teeth. Fancy the terror of the besiegers, quietly encamped below, who, though they were quite prepared for the whistling of bullets, were far from anticipating the appearance of such

messengers armed to the teeth, rushing into the midst of them. The Tschetschensian would profit by their momentary surprise, dart amidst his foes with a tiger's spring, shoot down one Russian with his pistol, then, seizing his dagger from between his teeth, begin to cut and thrust like a frenzied man among the soldiers, till he fell himself, pierced with their bayonets. The Tschetschensian would commonly send two Russians into the other world, before he bit the dust himself, and his sacrifice would be applauded by his comrades above as a glorious martyrdom.

The Caucasian character loses considerably on being closely examined by the eyes of a German, who would so gladly find the ideal of a chivalrous, noble-hearted race in these mountaineers, so bravely and so perseveringly fighting against Sclavonic superiority, but who soon turns away with horror from their savage and cruel natures. But their splendid heroism in battle, and the magnanimous contempt of death among the Tschetschensians, must always command our admiration. Even among the bravest European armies, very few individuals would probably be found whose enthusiasm would be sufficient to impel them to encounter alone a certain death, as was done

by the mystical Murids at Akulcho, who commonly left a wife and children behind them. It must be admitted that such actions are worthy of being recited by the Ki-koa-koa to the sound of their lyre, in order that the glorious deeds of the father may be perpetuated to their children's children.

How sublimely simple is that Caucasian ode on the heroic death of Prince Pschugui, portions of which have been given by Mr. Bell. In this poem, the mother of the slain is represented as saying : "Thank God that my son has fallen on the field of honour, and not on a plundering expedition !" Even the grief of the mourning mother is not able to weigh down her proud joy. "The son whom I bore with pain, and nourished at my breast, was chosen by God to be a martyr in the cause of freedom, and of the faith." What an iron race this must be, amongst whom a mother's love is subservient to the love of honour ! Does not this triumphant mourning of the princely mother remind one of the old Scottish General, at the news of the murder of his son by Macbeth :

Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death.

Such examples of voluntary self-sacrifice on the part of the defenders of Akulcho, did not augur well to the besiegers regarding the issue of the approaching storm. But the Russians are determined soldiers, and the officers, in particular, are so ambitious of decorations and advancement, that they longed for the time to arrive, notwithstanding its perils, when they were to mount up to the assault. The Russian soldier who, notwithstanding all his bravery, obtains no cross of Vladimir, and no lieutenant's epaulettes, had to be stimulated by music, song, vodka, and the Pope's prayers, instead of ambitious hopes. Thrice was the moon renewed during this siege. When the queen of night illuminated the savage scene with her silver beams, the nights were pre-eminently beautiful, the silence of the mountains being only interrupted by the solemn roar of the Koissu torrent, and occasionally by a yelling, unnatural shout descending from Akulcho, which some regarded as a *qui vive*, or challenge, and others as a call to prayers. If there are any men among the Russian officers who have read Æschylus, many of them might think at such moments of the bound Prometheus, who uttered similar screams on the same spot,

when his vitals were being gnawed by the eagle. And now, once again, as in early times, the voracious beak of the double eagle threatened this devoted and ill-fated band of Murids ; and the other Tschetschensians were able to exclaim with the chorus of the Okeanidæ :

Whatever mortals, too, cultivate the neighbouring soil of
Holy Asia,
Sympathize with thy vastly lamentable miseries.

The first attempt at storming the fortress of Akulcho, cost the Russians a great loss of life. Only a hundred and fifty men are said to have come back of fifteen hundred who ascended the rocky path. The Tschetschensians swept the approaches, where only two men could march abreast, with such destructive volleys, that not a man succeeded in reaching even the second terrace. The failure of the first attempt did not shake General Grabbe in his determination to venture two other assaults.

The lower and the intermediate mountain terraces were carried ; but the three assaults cost 2000 men. The highest terrace was the most difficult to take ; for though the Russians attacked it most gallantly, the resistance was desperate, and much blood was shed on both

sides. Without the improvidence of its defenders, the Russians would probably not have succeeded in capturing this last stronghold at all. The Russian sappers had been labouring for weeks at a mine, intended to blow up the highest rocks ; and the porous nature of the stone facilitated their work. The Tschetschensians, who did not comprehend the cause of the protracted inactivity of the Russians after their last assault, heard day and night a continual knocking under their feet, and, fearing some mischief, sought to discover what the enemy was secretly doing. Thus they improvidently ventured out of their cover to see what was going on. A Russian *chef-de-bataillon*, who was concealed with his men on the second terrace, behind a rocky promontory, took advantage of this moment to rush suddenly upon the foremost Tschetschensians, and though the latter flew back to shelter with all speed, the most nimble of the Russians climbed up simultaneously with them to the upper terrace. The remaining Tschetschensians, who had stayed behind, were afraid to fire directly for fear of wounding their own people. Hence a conflict took place at close quarters with cold steel, in which the small number

of Tschetschensians, no longer protected by their rock, naturally sank beneath the superiority of numbers; for the remaining Russian battalions, when they saw the success of the first, rushed up the hill after it. Thus Akulcho was captured by a fourth assault, August 22nd. The Russians, embittered by their heavy losses, raged like tigers; and a detachment of Tschetschensian women, who assisted their husbands with arms in their hands, were cut down.

The Muscovites searched eagerly among the dead for the body of Schamyl, whose stern features were known to many of the Russians who had been taken prisoners. But he was not found among the fallen; and they eventually discovered that a part of the defenders had escaped, and were concealed in caverns facing the river, and inaccessible to any path, being only reached by ropes let down from above. The contest was continued with those who had escaped to their holes, no quarter being asked or given on either side. The cavern in which Schamyl was concealed held out the longest. But there seemed no hope of escape, as the mountain was completely invested by troops, and a chain of men were posted on both banks of the river, because

Grabbe regarded it as the chief aim of his expedition to secure the person of Schamyl.

At this critical moment, the heroism of the little band of surviving Tschetschensians showed itself in the most brilliant light. They foresaw that the death of their chief would put a stop to the resistance in the mountains for a long time; and they resolved to sacrifice themselves as willing victims to save Schamyl. Accordingly, they prepared a kind of raft of beams and planks, which they found in the caverns, and they cast themselves down on the raft into the Koissu. Clinging to the beams, they pushed off into the stream, saluted by a shower of Russian bullets from both banks. The Russian general thought that the Tschetschensian chief was on this raft in person, and gave orders to leave no expedient untried to kill or capture him. But whilst the mountaineers were thus drawing off the attention of their foes from the cavern, whilst the mounted Cossacks were dashing into the river, and the infantry followed the banks of the stream, so that not a single Tschetschensian might escape, a man jumped out of the cavern into the Koissu, swam with a powerful arm through its current, reached a part of its banks

free from Russians, and escaped to the mountains, whilst all the others, floating down on the raft, were slain. This man was Schamyl, the only individual who escaped the butchery at Akulcho. The reader may easily imagine how his romantic adventure and miraculous escape operated on the minds of a people gifted with a remarkable tendency to religious enthusiasm, and for believing in the wonderful. Accordingly, the reverence for Schamyl has immeasurably increased in the eastern Caucasus since the fall of Akulcho.

General Grabbe was very savage, that his deadly foe had escaped him, whose head alone would have been worth much more than those of all the other defenders of Akulcho together. Three thousand men had been sacrificed to take a rocky nest, which was not thought worthy of being permanently occupied, even after it was taken. All the male defenders had perished, but some hundred women and children fell into the hands of the Russians, as prisoners. These captives were shut up, till the retreat of the Russians, in the great caverns, before mentioned, and a singular adventure occurred there at this time. A young Russian

staff officer, stimulated by curiosity, entered one of these caverns, to see if any of the women were pretty. He approached one of them, who struck him by her size, and whilst he was curiously scanning the muffled figure, the latter cast away her linen wrapper. A bearded Tschetschensian, with flaming eyes, stepped forth from the disguise, rushing on the curious officer, brandishing his kinschal in his hand. The Russian naturally took to flight as fast as his legs could carry him, with the mountaineer after him. Happily, the guards had observed the occurrence, and thrust down the Tschetschensian with their bayonets, in time. This terrible fellow defended himself furiously, even when down, and was a long time dying, though pierced with many bayonets ; he rolled wildly about, roared like a bull, and tore up the grass so desperately, that the spectators of the scene could not witness it without a painful shuddering.

The faces of the seven hundred Tschetschensian corpses, which were cast into the Koissu after the storming, were many of them fearfully distorted. The burning passions that

had animated the fallen Murids even in death, whilst fighting on the highest rocks face to face with the Russian grey-coats, were still visible in their grim features and glazed eyes. They commonly expressed a thirst for blood, hatred of the Russians, and triumph in their sanguinary reprisals. Dreadful war ! If these wild Caucasians only knew how unwillingly and sorrowfully the poor Russian soldiers take part in the Caucasian war, they would moderate their fierce hatred, and possibly treat their unhappy prisoners with less severity. These poor fellows are the obedient slaves of that iron will, which has resolved, once for all, to subjugate this refractory Caucasus at any price. The black regulation bread, and the cruel discipline, cannot be so attractive to these men, that they leave their northern home of their own accord, and march gaily to a murderous war against the freedom of a brave people, that has never done them any injury.

2. THE DEFEAT OF THE RUSSIANS AT ITSCHKERI.

After the fall of Akulcho, Schamyl removed his residence to the aoul of Dargo, in a

mountainous country south of Girselaul, called by the inhabitants Itschkeri. The Tschetschensian chieftain, making this place his head-quarters, prosecuted the war vigorously against the Russians, appearing with his cavalry one day on the Sundscha, another on the Terek and Koissu, and cutting off convoys, or attacking kreposts and stanitzas on all hands. General Grabbe could not agree with his superior officer, General Golovin, as to the proper mode of carrying on the war. The former was always for undertaking bold expeditions into the mountains, whilst the latter, was more disposed to the defensive and blockade system. Accordingly Grabbe made a journey to Petersburg, in order to obtain a sanction for his plans there. It appears that his system was preferred by the authorities in the capital, to the more pacific measures of the Commander-in-Chief, at Tiflis, who lived somewhat remote from the scene of action. To obtain a correct insight into the state of matters in the Caucasus, the Emperor sent his Minister of War, Prince Tschernitschef, there in the summer of 1842, to inspect the strongholds of Cis- and Trans-Caucasia. But

before the Prince visited the left wing, General Grabbe determined to astonish his distinguished visitor by a splendid achievement, and to this end he undertook an expedition against Schamyl at Itschkeri.

On the 29th of May, 1842, the Russian column marched south from Girselaul, to the mountains. Girselaul is an important stronghold, one hundred and twenty versts east of Grosnaja, on the left bank of a little stream, which is called Aksai, on the Russian ordnance maps. The Russian column consisted of thirteen battalions of infantry, (about eight thousand men.) The cavalry was left behind, because of the broken nature of the ground, and Grabbe only kept a small detachment of Cossacks as his personal escort. Every soldier carried sixty cartouches with him, besides provisions for eight days, in his knapsack. The artillery consisted of mountain guns, four and six-pounders, each piece drawn by four horses; a tumbril, laden with ammunition, was also dragged over the heavy ground with great trouble. General Grabbe had under his orders Generals Labinzoff and Baldinin.

The mountain district of Itschkeri, is covered

with beautiful groves of trees. Primeval oaks, beech trees, ashes, elms, aspens, often with trunks of immense girth, extend their thousand verdant arms to the sky. Fir trees are entirely wanting. So thick a growth of high flowers, and creepers cover the ground of this virgin forest, which has never been crushed by the woodman's axe, that the march of the heavily laden column, was impeded by it. On the evening of the 29th of May, they reached a clearance, where the column halted, and bivouacked. Not a shot had been fired, during this first day's march. The tirailleurs of the vanguard, maintained, however, that they had occasionally descried, behind the trees, the spare forms of some mountaineers, who, like the demons of the wood, scrutinized the long line of advancing bayonets, and vanished without giving any sign of friendly reception, or of hostile intent. Schamyl wished evidently to entice the Russians into the labyrinthine glades of the forest, and not to deter his opponent from his undertaking, by premature attacks. After midnight, when their soup had been swallowed, their vodka drank, when they were beginning to extinguish the bivouac fires, and

the battalions were lying asleep in the grass, the first attack began. Shots from invisible hands, began to drop into the column from all sides. The numerous Russian outposts replied to them, firing in every direction, where the flashing of guns betrayed a foe. Few men were slain on either side, in this nocturnal engagement, but the skirmishing was so continual and persevering, that all the battalions were roused from sleep, and stood to arms. Hence the night's rest of the Russians was effectually broken, and they were sooner tired on the next day's march. The enemy had disappeared the following day, but about noon, whilst they were marching through a woody ravine, the enemy appeared again in great force, and kept up a steady fire with the Russian skirmishers. Many severely wounded Russian riflemen were carried back to the main column, where the horses and carts were soon insufficient to carry them away. Several superior staff officers, now advised General Gabbe to give up his undertaking, and to give orders to retreat, for they had not accomplished even half the distance to the aoul of Itschkeri; the

difficulty of the march was increasing, and the enemy was attacking them at every step, with more relentless fury. But the General who had set his heart on surprizing Prince Tschernitscheff with a victory, would not hear a word about retreat. They bivouacked again in a mountain meadow, amongst the forest, and skirmished with the Tschetschensians throughout the night.

On the third day's march, too, they advanced still skirmishing, the number of the dead and wounded increased every moment, and the situation of the column became so critical, that General Grabbe gave, at length, the order to retire, though they had now advanced within twelve versts of the fortified aoul of Dargo, the proposed object of the expedition, which could be distinguished with the naked eye. But scarcely had the van-guard of the column begun to fall back, when the impetuosity of the mountaineers could no longer be kept within bounds. Up to this time, the column had been saluted with a full share of bullets, but none, save the leading files, and the chain of light infantry, had

come to close quarters with cold steel. Now, however, the line of skirmishers was broken by bands of furious Tschetschensians.

These daring cavaliers dashed with flashing schaschkas into the centre of the column, into which they broke many times, in spite of the fence of bayonets opposed to them. Coolness and discipline had always secured an orderly retreat to the Russian columns on the battle fields of Europe, and tired out their pursuers; but here those useful military qualities were not sufficient. Worried and pressed by a relentless foe, who was unused to grant quarter, exhausted by fighting and marching, or by loss of blood, tormented with thirst, (no springs could be found,) many a brave soldier left his ranks, and throwing down his arms, remained behind the column, awaiting his fate at the hands of the first Tschetschensian he might meet.

The night of the 31st of May to the 1st of June was fearful. The mountaineers would not allow the Russians a single hour's sleep. They surrounded the bivouacking column, howling like wolves, which feel already secure of their prey. The Russian Generals passed

a sleepless and an anxious night, almost despairing of escape, and writing orders which could only be partially carried into effect, owing to the obscurity. The Tschetschensians were more sparing of their powder by night than by day, when they could take better aim. Their chief object, in these night attacks, seems to have been to entirely wear out their antagonists, who were already exhausted by want of sleep and rest, so that they might make light work of them in the engagements by day. A considerable number of Russian soldiers who could no longer endure the torments of thirst, took advantage of the darkness to go over to the enemy. Several of them were cut down by mistake by the Tschetschensians, who did not, in all cases, comprehend that they were deserters. The rising sun of June 1, illumined a ghastly scene.

The Russian soldiers, exhausted by fighting and watching, gave themselves up as lost ; a few took leave of the sun whilst prostrate in prayer, and others suffered themselves to be cut down in silent despair. The *élite* of the freshest and bravest troops were thrown

out as skirmishers, to keep off the enemy, if possible, from the main column, where the weaker, exhausted and wounded soldiers were staggering painfully onwards under the load of their knapsacks. The tirailleur skirmish was kept up with such persevering ardour, that every soldier in many companies fired 300 shots. This rendered their muskets unserviceable, and a pressing message was sent to General Labinzoff, to relieve the chain by fresh troops, so that the others might, at least, have time to clean their pieces. But a considerable time elapsed before fresh skirmishers could be collected from the column ; many of the sharpshooters engaged with the enemy, could no longer reply to their fire, because their pieces could not be discharged. Though the officers had disguised themselves in privates' great-coats, to prevent being recognized by the foe, they were the chief targets of the hostile bullets of the mountaineers, whose hawks' eyes could easily discover them by their features, notwithstanding their travestie. Thirty-six officers out of sixty were killed.

The number of the Tschetschensians who

followed close upon the Russians, attacking them in rear, and on both flanks, did not exceed 6,000 men. Thus they did not equal the Russians in strength, but had the advantage over them in activity, and in knowledge of the ground, which enabled them to collect in mass on given points, to break through the chain of skirmishers, and to attack the weakest sides of the column, sword in hand. They had taken a Russian drummer on the 31st of May, and they forced him to beat the charge. Many tirailleurs who followed the sound into the wood, thinking it the direction of the column, fell into ambushes and were cut down. All Russian eye-witnesses pay the highest tribute to the personal bravery displayed by their antagonists, particularly on the last day of the conflict. The extraordinary strength of the Tschetschensians, in handling the sword, was particularly remarkable; they parried the bayonet thrusts of the Russian infantry with the greatest dexterity, and split their skulls with a strength that had not been ascribed to these slight wasp-like mountaineers.

Whilst the Russians were marching through

a thick forest, the centre of the column was attacked with indescribable fury. They fought man to man, in the closest encounter. Six cannon were captured by the Tschetschensians, and all the artillery-men cut down. The Russian column halted outside the wood ; the news of the capture of the cannon reached the vanguard ; all the men were enraged at it, and they determined to fall, rather than to endure the disgrace of losing their guns at the hands of a horde of wild mountaineers. Lieutenant-colonel Wittert, returned into the wood with two battalions ; the officers cheering on their men at their head, sword in hand. The Russians dashed with lowered bayonets, and loud cheers on the Tschetschensians. Crowding round the captured guns, their bodily exhaustion vanished as by a miracle through the animation of this charge. The brave Lieutenant-colonel Hahn, was one of the first, who spurring his horse, cut his way through as far as the cannon. Here, placing his hand on one of the iron muzzles, he died a hero's death, cut in two by a Tschetschensian sword. Five cannon were retaken by the Russians, but one had to be left in the hands

of the enemy, because its carriage was broken; and hence it could not be dragged off. The resistance of the Tschetschensians near the cannon was terrific. Some of the boldest champions, climbed up the lofty trees, tied themselves to their upper branches, and shot down from their lofty citadel on the Russians. When the Muscovite bullets reached their foes in their shady concealment, the latter did not fall, but remained hanging in the branches, a prey to the birds, instead of the worms.

Amongst the losses of the last day's conflict, the Russians had especial cause to regret Lieutenant-colonel Trasskin, an excellent officer, who, mortally wounded by a bullet, died in a few hours.

Before his death, he is said to have requested an interview with General Grabbe, and on the latter appearing, he is reported to have reproached him bitterly as the cause of his death. He was hastily buried on the spot where he breathed his last. The Tschetschensians disinterred the corpse, without mutilating it, and sold it subsequently for two hundred silver roubles, to a brother of the deceased, the present Chief of the Staff at Tiflis, who gave a worthy

resting place to the remains of the brave officer.

Outside the woody region, the attacks of the Tschetschensians became weaker, and the cavalry alone continued to skirmish with the Russian rear. It was only on the last day's conflict, that this cavalry had appeared on the scene of action, led by Schamyl in person. This chieftain is reported to have marched through a part of the mountains during the march of the Russians, to collect his followers ; whilst in his place, the chiefs, Achwerdi-Mahoma, and Hadschi-Murat, had led the infantry into action, till his arrival. If Schamyl had succeeded in bringing his cavalry two days earlier to the scene of action, Grabbe's army would possibly have been exterminated. Its loss in dead and wounded amounted to nearly two thousand men. The exhausted expeditionary column reached the fort of Girselaul in the most deplorable condition, whilst it had been joyfully anticipated as returning from a decisive victory, and preparations were making to receive it with a triumphant salute. Instead of this, they beheld a tottering band of pallid and

emaciated men, marching up with dejected looks and muffled drums. The Minister of War, Prince Tschernitschef, who happened to be at Girselaul, was an eye witness to the scene.

The Russian soldiers were able to console themselves that they had been defeated whilst fighting bravely and honourably against the obstacles of nature, and against antagonists, who, as far as their history reaches, have invariably displayed a heroic courage, and who, though in their last disaster, they were inferior to the Russians in number, had their familiarity with the ground, and with mountain warfare in their favour. All this, however, was poor consolation to the widowed mothers and fatherless children. Most of the Russian soldiers in the Caucasus are married, and it was harrowing to hear the lamentations of these poor creatures, when they found that the column had returned without their husbands. Cold comfort could they draw from the thought that those they loved had fallen on the field of honour, and in the service of the Emperor. Such is invariably the dark side of even the most glorious and successful warlike achievement.

The return from war always brings to mind the words of Iphigenia :

“ The daring fight immortalizes the man ;
For though he fall, his name shall live in song.
But no future age shall count the endless tears
Of the surviving and deserted wife ;
And the poet overlooks the thousand days
And nights of weeping.”

3. THE CAMPAIGN OF PRINCE WORONZOF AGAINST DARGO.

(*Extract from a private Russian letter.*)

“ Girselanl, August 5, 1845.

“ Count Woronzoff has accomplished the most daring, but also the most bloody campaign, that a Russian column has ever effected in Daghestan ; but I am sorry to have to add that the advantages obtained scarcely counterbalance our losses. We have lost more than three thousand men, including many brave and valuable officers, whose death will fill all Russia with mourning. We had the most unpropitious weather as far as Andy ; newly fallen snow lay on the pics of the main chain to the south, and even the heights of Retschel were still covered with their wintry mantle. During these cold days, the troops laboured at the krepost Gogatel,

in throwing up earth entrenchments, to surround the newly established magazines of provisions and forage. Meanwhile, our outposts, consisting of the Georgian companies, and the Caucasian militia, drove back to the hills the separate bands of Tschetschensians, which showed themselves at intervals ; but, hitherto, nothing serious was undertaken. The resistance of the mountaineers on our advance to Andy, had been much slighter than we had anticipated ; they seldom fired, they did not attack us with their swords, as was their wont, and they often rested satisfied with rolling down stones on our skirmishers. Many thought that the mountaineers laboured under a deficiency of gunpowder, and not a few novices in the army, thought we had exaggerated the warlike spirit of this people, and the perils of Caucasian campaigns. Meanwhile, Woronzoff had his eyes everywhere ; he attended with a paternal interest to the comfort of the sick and wounded, the soldiers received good and fresh rations, their mood was more cheerful and merry than was usually the case in camp, the works proceeded amidst song and laughter, and the day was concluded with music. The weather, more-

over, had become more genial and temperate, and on the 17th of July, the Count issued orders to decamp on the following day. Our column, including the native auxiliaries, did not exceed ten thousand men, and consisted almost entirely of infantry ; we had only four hundred Cossacks with us, who had the utmost difficulty in leading on their horses over the woody and broken ground. The convoy was reduced to the smallest number possible of baggage horses, and the Commander-in-chief gave especial orders that the soldiers should not be immoderately loaded, as had been the case under Grabbe, when every man carried sixty pounds weight in his knapsack. The pass of the chain of Retschel, separating Andy and the country of the Gumbeten from Itschkeri and Great Tschetschnaja, was occupied without resistance. Beyond the northern declivity of this woody mountain, lies the aoul Dargo, which was the main object of this expedition. Dargo was, since the destruction of Akulcho, one of the most usual haunts of Schamyl, who had accumulated a large store of arms, powder, and provisions there.

He had also built a mosque there, which

was visited by numerous pilgrims, from the remotest corners of Daghestan and Lesghistan, partly in order to pray there, and partly to bring intelligence respecting the state of the country, and the movements of the Russian columns to their revered and dreaded chief, who unites, in his own person, the dignities of priest and king. The most eminent adherents of Schamyl also dwelt there ; nevertheless, this chieftain often shifted his residence, and dispatched his Murids to different parts of the Tschetschnaja, to preach the holy war against the Russians, to gather in tribute, and to obtain recruits under his flag. His army had recently received strong accessions of Kistes, Ingusches, Avars, and people from Lesghistan ; for our march to Andy had roused all the mountain clans.

Dargo is not protected, like Akulcho, by precipitous, inaccessible rocks, but by the thick and extensive forests of beech trees, which impede its approach on all sides. General Grabbe had attempted to approach Dargo from the north, in 1842, and had failed, as is well known, in his imprudent enterprise, which cost him his command, and his military reputation.

When our vanguard penetrated into the thick groves of Itschkeri, after passing through almost impervious ravines, the enemy attacked us on all hands, with the greatest determination, firing upon us from behind the fallen trunks and fascines, which they had piled up as intrenchments behind the trees, and across our road. They did not burn much powder, but every shot told, for they took admirable aim. These invisible shots picked off especially the officers, whom they readily distinguished, though disguised by the orders of Count Woronzoff, in privates' coats, and without any decorations. The enemy probably detected our officers, by their not carrying any muskets.

The cannon effected little against these barricades ; it was necessary to carry them with the bayonet. In this duty, the Georgian companies, and Caucasian militia showed themselves rather backward ; and our battalions had to show them the way. Immediately that one of our men fell, he was instantly stripped of his arms and cartridges by the enemy. After this, the mountaineers paid no further attention to the Russian corpses ; but they carried off their own dead and wounded

most scrupulously into the thicket. Our battalions, notwithstanding their impetuous courage, only advanced at the rate of one verst and a half (one mile) per hour, because of the natural and artificial barricades opposed to them, of the wild and tangled growth of plants impeding their progress, and of the narrow, and steep character of the path, which were even greater obstacles than the obstinate resistance of the enemy. Yet the vanguard reached Dargo before dusk. This aoul is situated on the declivity of a mountain, on the edge of a ravine, and consists of sixty or seventy stone houses ; a few more solid buildings stood near them, built of stones cemented with mortar, and not, like the others, roughly piled together, as is usual in Caucasian dwellings. One of these buildings had several irregular towers, which appeared of ancient date. A thick smoke arose from these larger buildings, and it was found that Schamyl had accumulated all the wood, corn, straw, and other combustibles, that he could not carry off to the mountains, and set fire to them, when he saw that he could not prevent the advance of our columns. The Lithuanian jägers occupied the deserted village before sunset ;

but night had set in before the staff arrived, and pitched their tents. The burning houses of Schamyl's captured residence, formed the bivouac fire of our head-quarters. It must be admitted, that this tremendous determination of the enemy, to decline all subjection, to defend the land of their fathers, step by step, and only to give up rubbish and smoking ashes, as trophies to the Russians, shows a savage grandeur which forces our admiration, though the enemy's chief be only a fanatical barbarian.

A very warm engagement took place, on the 19th of July. Schamyl occupied, with six thousand Tchetschensians, a high mountain close to Dargo, and commanding our position. He enfiladed our camp with some artillery ; and, though his guns were badly pointed, and did us no injury whatever, yet it happened that once a ball fell close to the tents of the staff. These balls were six pounders, and were probably discharged from the same cannon that Schamyl had taken at the capture of Unzula. According to the report of the natives, these guns are served by Russian deserters and renegades ; but they are seldom used by the enemy,

either for fear of losing them, or because they take so much powder.

The Commander-in-chief sent General Labinzoff, with five battalions of infantry and all the mounted Caucasian militia, to drive the enemy from his position, and, if possible, to capture his cannon. Our tirailleurs climbed up the hill, with their usual activity, but were soon driven in on the battalions; for the mountaineers defended themselves most vigorously. Yet, the heights were ultimately carried by our troops, at the point of the bayonet; but the hostile cannon had already disappeared in the woods. Since our column had only brought provision for five days, which was not sufficient for Count Woronzoff's projected operations in the north, the Commander-in-chief sent six battalions, under the orders of Lieutenant-General Klucke von Klugenau, to the heights of Retschel, in order to escort an envoy, which we expected from Andy.

Whilst this column, which consisted of half our force, marched in a pouring rain through the woody ground that we had passed in advancing from Andy to Dargo, it was surrounded

by swarms of mountaineers, which inflicted a heavy loss on it by their well-aimed shots ; but the attack became really furious during the return of the column to Dargo. Whoever is acquainted with the terrible nature of the ground in the mountainous territory of Daghestan, can form some idea of the immense difficulty experienced in moving a convoy, half a league in length, over steep mountain ridges, through narrow ravines and thick forests. The enemy easily find a weak point in such an extended line, where the escort can be overwhelmed by a superior force and advantageous position.

" Hitherto the mountaineers had confined themselves to a steady fire of musketry ; but, as they had been meanwhile reinforced by large accessions of Lesghian and Tschetschensian tribes, they dashed into the unfortunate column, brandishing their schaschkas and kinschals. Possibly, they may have been additionally excited by the desire of making reprisals ; for they had suffered severe losses during the preceding days ; and every Caucasian who falls, leaves behind him avengers, whom custom does not suffer to take any rest till they have atoned for

the blood of their brother or friend, by the death of an enemy. Perhaps the sight of the spoil on the horses and in the carts, acted as a still more powerful stimulant. Officers who accompanied this ill-fated column assured me, that the enemy had never exhibited such impetuosity and courage on any former occasion. They dashed in large bands through the chain of skirmishers into the column. Schamyl led the attack in person with his Murids, who always form the nucleus of his force. Two of our best Generals, Wiktorof and Passek, died heroically, not like General Fock, who, a few days before fell in a shower of bullets, but pierced by Caucasian swords; for they had to engage hand to hand with the mountaineers. Their bodies were left behind in the wood. Perhaps, we may eventually succeed in recovering them for money, so as to give them an honourable burial in a Russian fortress.

"When General Klucke found it impossible to protect the convoy, he sacrificed a part of it; and even a canon was lost. The column closed up, to present a more solid resistance to the enemy. In effecting this manoeuvre, a

portion of the tirailleurs fell into an ambush ; for the enemy had captured some Russian trumpeters, and forced them to sound in the midst of the wood, by which means, many of our skirmishers, who were deceived by the trumpet-call, followed a false direction. The ill-fated column reached Dargo in the most deplorable plight, having left behind 1300 dead in the forest. The enemy captured more than three hundred laden mules and waggons. The weather had been throughout eminently unfavourable ; and we had almost daily showers, which did not, however, prevent the enemy from continually swarming around us. The worst thing was, that our provisions began to fail. The soldiers only received half-rations, and the cavalry, as well as the baggage-horses, had to be fed with green meat, because all our supply of oats, which we expected from Andy, had fallen into the hands of the enemy. We left Dargo on the 25th of June, and began our retreat through the Aksai valley. We found everywhere new barricades erected, which often entirely filled up the narrow pass between the river and the mountain side ; and our brave rifle battalions,

who marched at the head of the column, and had to receive the fire of the enemy, had a hard time of it.

"When we once more entered the thickets of those primeval forests, the contest became extremely hot ; and our rifles had to be reinforced several times, in order not to be entirely crushed by the superiority of the enemy. It was in this same wood, on the left bank of the Aksai, that General Grabbe had experienced his celebrated defeat, in 1842 ; and the chief of our staff, General Trasskin, must have been affected by bitter feelings at this spot ; for it was here that his brave brother, Colonel Trasskin fell. It was very unlucky for us, that, during these continual and hot skirmishes, in which we were perpetually engaged with the enemy, our means of transport for carrying off the wounded and sick, were quite insufficient. Almost all the Cossack horses were already laden with wounded officers and soldiers, and our troopers were forced to march on foot. But even this sacrifice did not suffice. Those who were only slightly wounded staggered along as well as they could ; but all who were wounded in the legs

were commonly lost. Many sick or weary soldiers lagging behind, fell also into the hands of our cruel enemy, who cut them down without mercy.

“The perplexity occasioned by the difficulty of transporting the wounded, determined our humane commander, who was deeply pained that brave soldiers who were unable to keep up with the column from sickness, or loss of blood, should fall victims to certain death, to halt without the woody territory, near the aoul of Schaugal Berdy, in the Aksai valley. Some natives, tempted by the offer of a large reward, succeeded in creeping through by night with despatches to Girselaul.

“On receiving the intelligence of our critical situation, the gallant General Freytag forced his way through the hostile bands to our bivouac, at the head of 6000 infantry, and 300 Cossacks. His arrival was welcomed by us with indescribable rejoicings. Measures were now adopted to forward the sick and wounded; and the gallant soldiers of the newly arrived column, divided the rations in their knapsacks with our starving battalions. The two corps united, and returned to Girselaul. The attacks of the enemy became

continually weakened the farther we advanced from the woods. On the 1st of August, we reached the fortress, where we could repose after the unheard-of hardships of this campaign, and nurse our wounded."

CHAPTER XIV.

Prince Michael Woronzoff.

A MAN who has enjoyed the rare felicity of possessing equal favour with the court, nobility, middle ranks and common people, and of preserving it unchanged through a long series of years, and amidst difficult trials, can scarcely be denied the gift of extraordinary qualities, even by the most jealous detractors. Prince Woronzoff is a favourite of this kind, with the four stages of Russian society, and there is scarcely a second name in that vast empire, to dispute this honour with him. At the period when I visited the Crimea, and when I had the good fortune to become personally acquainted with this rarely gifted man, I was well aware that the first members

of the aristocracy paid every respect to the Governor-General of New Russia, and I also heard of the unanimous favour, with which he was regarded by the whole of the middle class, which possesses much more numerous representatives, in the shape of merchants and small farmers, in the south of Russia, than in the north. I also, myself, witnessed how people of the lower classes, such as, Russian peasants, Tartars, Jews and gypsies displayed, on every occasion, their warmest affection for their protector and benefactor. But I was ignorant at that time that Count Woronzoff (as he was then styled) also enjoyed the special favour of his sovereign. When among well-informed men, in private circles, the conversation touched on the relations of the Count with the court, their countenance usually assumed an expression of secrecy. I have never succeeded in discovering if this proceeded from a wish to conceal their ignorance on the matter. The prevailing opinion was, that Count Woronzoff was only tolerated at his post, because no plausible reason could be adduced for removing him, and because even an autocrat was *obliged* to spare a servant

of such distinguished talents and character, of such reputation and wealth, and of such great popularity. It was affirmed, however, that the Count had been more than once blackened at court; at all events, that he could not be reckoned among the favourites of the Emperor, such as Orloff, Kleinmichel, Adlerberg, Wolkonski, Tschernitscheff, &c., and that he was treated as an eminent '*foreigner*' at St. Petersburg, where he went as seldom, and stayed as short a time as he could. His position was never considered very secure. Though the higher officials had entertained a great and universal respect for his character, he nevertheless had bitter enemies, and men were designated by name, who were not only supposed accurately to scrutinize his measures, but even to make reports of his expressions at table, to the chief of the secret police at St. Petersburg. Under these circumstances, this motive was assigned for his reserved behaviour towards such odious *employés* as the man who was then governor of the Crimea, M——ff, whose wife was a Bibikoff and a relation to Benkendorf. Two years after my departure from the Crimea,

Woronzoff was appointed Governor-General of the Caucasian provinces. In this manner, the widely diffused error, that Count Woronzoff was viewed in an unfavourable light by his sovereign, was triumphantly refuted.

The state of affairs in the Caucasus, in the year 1844, was very critical. For twenty years, attempts had been made to govern it with men of the most opposite qualities and characteristics, but the right man had never been found. No Russian Governor, since Jermoloff, had been quite equal to the magnitude of the task. Paskewitsch had been more successful in his wars against the Persians and Turks, than in his administrative measures. Rosen was only reckoned a clever man of business. Golovin brought to Trans-Caucasia the majestic pomp and diplomatic placidity of an Asiatic grandee, besides a good will in the cause, but no very striking ability. Neidhardt, the military commandant of Moscow, had come under the notice of the Emperor, as a man of unshakable integrity and conscientiousness, as an indefatigably active worker, and for these reasons he had been appointed to the head of Caucasian affairs, but he was wanting in the

eagle eye of Jermoloff, and in his powerful activity. Changes of the subordinate Generals along the line were quite as frequent as those of the *Korpski* commanders in Tiflis, according as the Emperor favoured a warlike, or a peaceable system. The enterprising leader of *razzias*, Sass, was superseded by the Hetman Sawadofski, who was opposed to mountain warfare, and the combative General Grabbe was relieved by the prudent, vacillating and peace-loving General Gurko. But the events of 1843, disappointed and put to flight all the plans and hopes which Prince Tschernitscheff and his adherents had built, on a defensive blockade system.

Schamyl broke through the line of the Russian blockade, took the fortress of Unzula, destroyed a Russian corps, which attempted to relieve the garrison, besieged General Kluge in Chunsak, and laid waste and depopulated the entire province of Avaria, which had sided with the Russian. Neidhardt marched forth the following year with a great force against Schamyl, without obtaining the slightest advantage. He was not a favourite either with the army or civilians, on account of the vexatious attention to trifles with which he managed all

affairs. It was a common thing to hear the genuine Russians, who are always jealous of the favour shown to Germans by the court, say: "how could it be expected that a *German pedant* should effect anything in the Caucasus. Since the new plan of operations, that had been decreed after the journey of inspection of the Minister of War had failed in its results, and it was quite clear that Neidhardt and Gurko were not equal to their post, the new decision of the Emperor was anticipated with the greatest anxiety. A few thought that Jermoloff would be now restored to the command of the army, though he was older, and the ingratitude shown to his eminent services, had broken his health. Others thought that the Minister of War, Prince Tschernitscheff, would take into his own hands the immediate direction of the Circassian affairs.

The appointment of the most popular man in Russia to the command of the army, and the supreme Government of all the provinces, from the Pruth to the Araxes, was a surprise to every one. The Emperor handed over dictatorial powers to Count Woronzoff, in ruling the Caucasian territory. This nobleman has

authority over the life and death of the natives, he can appoint or degrade an *employé* up to the sixth rank in the army of the Caucasus without referring to the Emperor; he can distribute rewards and decorations, according to his own good pleasure, and can hand over functionaries and officials to judgment, of his own accord. In this instance, the Emperor has given up a great part of his autocratic power to his servant. Such an instance is almost unexampled in Russian history. Even Prince Paskewitsch in Poland, is not invested with any authority approaching to that of Woronzoff. This nobleman was, at the same time, confirmed in his post as Governor of Little Russia, a territory exceeding the united surface of Germany, France and England. No Russian grandee has possessed so much power since Potemkin, the all powerful favourite of Catherine, who peopled Siberia with Boyards.

It is a very prevalent opinion, even in Russia, that the noble house of Woronzoff is one of the oldest Boyard families, and is descended from that family of counts, which played such an important part in the fifteenth century.

Prince Peter Dolgorouki, who has made careful inquiries into the Russian noble families, contradicts this in the most decided manner, in his "*Notices sur les principales familles de la Russie.*" That old family of Boyards, became extinct in the year 1576, as Dolgorouki proves from the archives of the state. Amongst the ancestors of the present family, no member is mentioned in Russian history, before the time of Gabriel Woronzoff, who fell in 1678, at the siege of Tschirigin. This nobleman had three grandsons, Roman, Michael, and Ivan. Michael Woronzoff was a man of remarkable manly beauty, and was in favour with the Empress Elizabeth, who named him her State-Chancellor, and who obtained for him a diploma of Count of the Holy Roman Empire, from Charles VII, in 1714.

He was a long time a favourite of the Empress, who married him to one of her cousins, Anna Skavronski. Michael Woronzoff had no male issue, but he succeeded in obtaining from the Empress, that the title of Count of the Roman Empire should devolve on both his brothers consecutively. Count Roman had two sons, Alexander and Simon, who both

raised themselves to the highest offices. The first was a Chancellor of the Empire, under Catherine ; Count Simon was Ambassador to London. Prince Michael Woronzoff, Commander-in-chief in the Caucasus, is the son of the latter. He received his first education in England, where his father, after losing the post of ambassador, lived as an exile, during the rule of the Emperor Paul. When Alexander ascended the throne, his confiscated property was restored to him. Michael Woronzoff, ever since his youth, has retained a great partiality for English society and the English language, but he shows a mixture of the English and French character in his manner and address. Nor can we doubt that he is indebted to the land of freedom for the humane and noble-hearted spirit which distinguishes him from all other Russian grandes ; for there is no other model of these qualities in Russia. In fact, he does not attempt to disguise his affection for English manners and institutions.

We do not purpose here to give a comprehensive biography of this remarkable man ; we only propose to give a sketch of his person and of his administration in the south of Russia, where

we beheld him a few years ago. Russian pens have already portrayed his former military services in the Caucasus, where he began his career, in the war of 1812 to 1814, against France, and in the last campaign against the Turks, when he took Varna. The laurels he won in the field do not, however, cast into the shade his services as a statesman. As successor of the highly respected Duke of Richelieu as Governor in Southern Russia, he had no slight task before him. Richelieu had acquired a lasting fame by his administration of Southern Russia, and especially by the advantages he had conferred on Odessa, a city that sprang up with wonderful rapidity under his fostering care, and where his name was almost deified. The beginning of the *European* importance of Odessa, dates from his administration. Woronzoff has continued the work of his predecessor, but on a still more magnificent scale. Not only did the trade of all sea-ports between Odessa and Taganrog increased amazingly under his administration, but he even founded new towns on the coast, and devoted the greater part of the income (which amounts to 1,200,000 paper roubles) to improve the

state of cultivation in the Crimea, which had been hitherto much neglected. Jalta, on the sea-coast of the Crimea, and Perdjansk, on the Sea of Azof, were founded by him. Perdjansk reckoned, in the year 1843, after it had been in existence scarcely five years, almost 6000 inhabitants, and is at the present moment one of the most important harbours in Russia for the exportation of corn. All the wheat from the steppes of the Maloschna, proceeding from the villages of the Malokani, and the flourishing colonies of the German Mermonites, is conveyed to Perdjansk. The whole sea-coast of the Crimea, from Balaklava to Sudagh, a distance of more than a hundred versts, which formerly was almost a wilderness, was converted into a blooming garden by the stimulus of his example.

The Count caused several thousand vines to be brought from Germany, France, and Spain, and distributed them gratuitously among the colonists and proprietors. The cultivation of vines, which was previously almost unknown in that region, has, since then, made such remarkable progress, that the amount of wine annually produced in the Crimea, is able to

supply half the requirements of the empire. Unfortunately, the present difficulty of transport, and the preference of rich Russians for wines of foreign growth, are still obstacles, impeding the spread of this cultivation.

Many Russian noblemen, being stimulated by the example of Woronzoff, bought estates on the Crimean coast, and built splendid castles there, and laid out broad parks. Amongst them, we must especially notice Potocki, Narischkin, Mordvinoff, Gallitzin, Witt, Gagarin, Rajewski, and others. At present, there is one continuous series of chateaux and estates from Aj-Petri to Ajudagh. One of the most splendid properties, Oreanda, belongs to the Dowager Empress of Russia, who has caused a most magnificent palace to be erected there.

Though not nearly so highly endowed by nature as the enchanting district of Mingrelia, the sea-coast of the Crimea has become the most habitable and agreeable part of the whole Russian Empire, by the assistance of art, and by landscape-gardening on an extensive scale, which unites the two objects of utility and embellishment. Woronzoff himself has laid out the handsomest estate. It bears the name of

Alupka, and is situated at the foot of Aj-Petri, whose grey rocks tower above the castle in the background, presenting the most picturesque forms. Oreanda, the property of the Empress, is situated a few versts more to the eastward. The chateau of Alupka is built in the Gothic style, the material consisting entirely of green-stone, and it was planned by an English architect. The internal arrangements combine English comfort with French elegance.

The building was not quite completed in the year 1843, although the Count had already inhabited the chateau for several years, during the summer months. The environs of Odessa are proverbially bare and tedious, and the heat and dust are insupportable in summer. But the Count loves the beauties of nature, and rural tranquillity, and appeared always happy, when his affairs allowed him to leave Odessa, and to remove to Alupka. In the summer of 1842, public duties had detained him unusually long at St. Petersburg, much against his inclination; nor does he attempt to disguise his antipathy to St. Petersburg life. He only returned to the Crimea in October, and his arrival, as usual, occasioned a most

pleasurable excitement amongst the population. He was saluted, on all hands, as the head of his large public family, and this child-like love, which the lowest and most indigent class experiences for him in the highest degree, is really not an empty name, it springs from the inmost heart, and whoever has seen the Count, in the midst of the people, and has witnessed the manner in which he receives petitions, listens to complaints, and endeavours, on all hands, to afford relief, will not for a moment countenance the idea that this is mere display, either on the part of this noble personage, in whom a magnanimous character seems a gift of nature, or on that of the poor people, whose moist eyes quietly proclaim their gratitude to their benefactor.

Late in the autumn of the year 1843, I was seated in the large dining-hall of the Chateau of Alupka, in a society in which the plain black coat of the civilian predominated over epaulettes and laced uniforms, a circumstance which is a rarity in the assemblies of the higher classes in Russia. The splendid and spacious apartments of this chateau dazzled

the eyes of Herr Koch to such an extent, that he says: "I should only wish to dine in the hall at Alupka, if I were a king or a hero." The company, when I was there, consisted of sixty invited guests, chiefly landed proprietors of the neighbourhood, stewards and physicians; but though none of us were either kings or heroes, a right royal repast was served up to us. The unembarrassed cheerfulness of the company, and the kindness of the noble host, gave the principal zest to the repast, which consisted of somewhat plain dishes; Crimean wines alone appearing on the table, the harsh and sharp taste of which is not of the most fragrant bouquet. Woronzoff sat at the centre of the table, between the two Princesses Gallitzin. A correspondent of the "*Allgemeine Zeitung*," at Tiflis, once observed that Woronzoff is the handsomest man in Russia, after the Emperor Nicholas. He is, in fact, almost as tall as that Emperor, of the same graceful form, and broad chest; a particularly vigorous old man, if a man past sixty ought to be called so. His beautiful countenance, and very healthy complexion, are heightened in effect

by his snow-white hair. A remarkable and noble mien speaks clearly out of his large eyes, and is imprinted on his broad and capacious forehead. Majesty, benevolence and cheerfulness form the most prominent characteristics of his physiognomy, whilst his bearing bespeaks repose and confidence; nature has, moreover, conferred on Woronzoff a dignity which has evidently marked him out for a distinguished part in life. You recognize, at the first glance, in his whole personality, a man of the world and a statesman, but without any study to display, or create an effect. He exercises a peculiar personal superiority and influence over all who surround him. He is tranquil and natural in conversation, never hunts after choice expressions, but even the most ordinary word appears, in his mouth, to attain an impress of significance, so that every one involuntarily listens to him. The conversation at table was directed, on that occasion to the most common-place generalities, and yet each guest listened to it with as much interest as if he had been present at a great intellectual entertainment.

Michael Woronzoff is one of the largest

landed proprietors in Russia. He has forty thousand serfs, of whom only a few reside at Alupka and Massandra, the greater number being on his estates in the interior. The Count has always devoted especial attention to the condition of these peasants, he would be so glad to see them all well off and happy, and he is, moreover, regarded as one of the adherents of the unconditional emancipation of the serfs. It may be here asked, why, if he entertain such sentiments, does he not affran-chize his forty thousand slaves. This, however, would exceed his power, for an emancipation of the masses in Russia is impossible. This could only be tolerated, under the condition that the serfs of Woronzoff should become crown serfs, or, in other words, serfs of the Emperor. In this case, the Count would lose half his income without essentially improving the condition of the peasants. But he gives their freedom to many individual serfs, who then cause their names to be inscribed in some commercial guild. I saw at Alupka, a freedman of this description, who had made a considerable fortune by trade and speculation, but who would not leave the neighbourhood of the Count, and

persisted in serving him, so much did he love his old master. He furnished materials for building the castle, and he still wore the long beard of the serfs. On one occasion, he was required to promise the Count to shave his beard. He resisted a long time, but at length consented to do so.

"It shall be done," he said, "the next time your Excellency comes to Alupka."

The time arrived, and not without many sighs, and sorely against the will of his better half, Ivan sacrificed the splendid forest of hair on his chin. His face, however, was so altered by this process, that the Count no longer recognized him. I, myself, witnessed the scene, when the faithful, but now beardless retainer appeared before his lord, and the latter broke forth into the heartiest laughter, when Ivan disclosed who he was.

Whoever is acquainted with the humane spirit of the Governor of New Russia, would be disposed to think that the serfs of Woronzoff must actually be as happy as free peasants in other countries. But it is a curse attending every reprehensible institution that the good intentions of one single man, who attempts

to mitigate their barbarity, in many cases only converts them into more terrible scourges. So long as Woronzoff does not succeed in imprinting his philanthropic spirit, even on those most intimate with him, no reform of a radical description is possible. He has severely prohibited ill-usage of the serfs, and yet beating goes on as much on his estates as on any others.

The following occurrence took place a short time before my arrival in the Crimea. The upper steward at Alupka and Massandra, is a pensioned officer, Colonel Jarnizki. This man has some good qualities, but being extremely addicted to paroxysms of passion, he caused one of the serfs to receive a hundred blows with rods, under the influence of one of these fits. The victim cast himself at the feet of Countess Woronzoff, and complained of Jarnizki. The Countess caused the officer to be summoned, upbraided him bitterly, and warned him seriously not to repeat such an act again. Jarnizki bowed, promised to do all he could to prevent it, and ordered the peasant to appear before him.

“ Fellow, thou hast dared to accuse me! Give him instantly five hundred strokes, and if

thou darest to open thy mouth, I will have thee beaten to death!"

The punishment is said to have been punctually inflicted, and every complaint was silenced for the future. At all events, such was the story told me. The Count once visited the new hospital at Jalta. He went from bed to bed, and found a serf of Baroness Bergheim suffering severely in the back. The surgeon attempted to deceive the Count with the assurance that the man was suffering from a syphilitic eruption; but the bearded peasant broke out into a complaining howl, and related that he had been dreadfully beaten, and had not been able to move a limb for weeks. The matter was carefully inquired into, and the statement of the serf was found to be correct. Leschmad, the German steward of the estate of Baroness Bergheim, who had personally inflicted the punishment, was delivered up to judgment, which condemned him to be beaten, after an imprisonment of several months.

The saying of the Count, that a man who half killed his peasant with beating, deserved the whip himself, had great weight with the judges, who would, otherwise, have preferred to

let Leschmad slip through their fingers. It was ordered that the punishment should be inflicted without any mitigation. At this intelligence, all the proprietors and overseers of serfs in the Crimea were roused into opposition against the Count, and the influential Count Potocki, the proprietor of Livadia, succeeded in obtaining the acquittal of Leschmad, through his wealthy connections. The occurrence appeared to me quite peculiar. To my great astonishment, all my acquaintances in the Crimea, took part against the Count in the affair, though justice was evidently on his side.

The condemnation of Leschmad appeared to them an unheard-of act of tyranny, whilst not an individual uttered a word of compassion for the poor peasant in the hospital, who had been beaten within an inch of his life. It is the ordinary result of the long continuation of such a system of slavery, that even men who usually appear gentle and amiable in society, become easily accustomed to practise unmeasured severity towards their serfs, and entirely lose sight of the idea, that a peasant is destined by God to enjoy the same rights of humanity as themselves.

The Tartars form seven-eighths of the population of the Crimea, and they are reckoned as constituting a part of the crown serfs. They love their governor, the Emperor's vice-gerent, who steps into their huts like a father, and whose ear is open to all their wants and complaints. The Tartars are happily situated, if we compare their lot with that of the noble's serfs and crown serfs in the interior of Russia. Yet the honest intention of the Governor-general to protect them against their oppressors, the subordinate *employés*, the tax-gatherers and police-inspectors, is insufficient to accomplish its aim. It would be necessary for a Woronzoff to multiply himself a thousandfold, effectually to carry out his wishes.

On the whole, he meets with but little support from his subordinates; yet there are some men who act up to his spirit, and who are upright, and incorruptible. Amongst these is Knäsewitsch, president of the Board of Finances at Simphero-pol, a man who has been most useful, and also the present Governor of the Crimea, Pestel, who endeavours to repair the faults of his predecessors in that post. It is a remarkable fact, that in every place where Woronzoff shows

himself, all the *employés* of the country fulfil their duties zealously and conscientiously, *so long as the Governor-general remains on the spot*. On his birthday, which he celebrates regularly, he invites numerous guests to his castle, including even common gardeners and Tartars, together with Russian princes, and the most eminent functionaries. Even the serfs have a holyday along the whole coast. Such a spectacle is almost unique in Russia, and I was delighted to witness it. The musicians at the château consisted of gipsies. Waltzes and mazurkas were danced ; the wine made this motley society merry and animated. It happened on one occasion that the Count was thrown down by his German gardener, Kabach, whilst dancing ; the gipsies, terrified at the accident, ceased to blow, the fiddle-bows remained silent in the hands of the fiddlers, and the guilty gardener wished to cast himself at the feet of his master. But the latter rose up quietly from the ground, and smiling, presented his hand to his servant, with the words : “The blame attaches to me, I ought to have got out of the way of such impetuous dancers. Proceed merrily as before, and take my wife as your

partner, only be careful that the same accident does not occur to her as to me!" The most unembarrassed cheerfulness prevailed in this mixed assembly, consisting of the highest nobility; and lower middle class. The serfs were, meanwhile, carousing jollily outside the château. I was especially interested in observing the bearing of the noble host amidst the joyous tumult, and in seeing what evident delight he took in the pleasure of the people, and how his countenance brightened with a happy gaiety. The looks of most present were perpetually directed to him, and followed him wherever he went. It is a luxury to see a great man!

Those who were acquainted with his character, were not surprised that Count Woronzoff should assume the heavy burthen attaching to the office of Commander-in-chief of the Caucasus. He had always a great partiality for the east in general, and the Caucasus in particular. He had learnt to know the chivalrous sons of the mountains in his youth; it is even related, that he had often fought individually with them, rather to familiarize himself with their skill in managing the sword, than from any sanguinary motive. He had carefully attended to all the

phases of the war in the Caucasus, and he always expressed the greatest sympathy for the events in that quarter. Even during the stay of Marshal Marmont in Southern Russia, the Caucasus had been the subject of daily conversation between them. Those who had the opportunity of closely observing the Count, for years, in his daily duties and avocations at Odessa, were of opinion, that though he took great interest in the *employés*, the cultivation of the land, the commercial relation &c., of his provinces, still his powerful mind found there no adequate field for his activity, and that he aimed at a larger and more important theatre. They were of opinion, that the proper post and suitable sphere for such a man, would be that of Governor-general of Turkey, after the conquest of Constantinople.

They affirmed that no person was so well adapted as Michael Woronzoff, at once, to impose on the Orientals, and to conciliate their affections, to reconcile the Turks to the Russian yoke, the contradictions between Christendom and Islam, and between the West and the East. I have heard, more than once, Russians who enthusiastically admire him, speak in

this manner of the Count, and whoever has seen what the Count has effected in the Crimea, might be inclined to coincide in these views. But it is not probable that the undertaking of governing Constantinople will fall to the lot of any Russian now living. Russia has still to digest the conquests of Catherine, and, until Poland and the Caucasus are more effectually Russianized, a Russian Emperor will scarcely stretch forth his hand in earnest for a booty, whose maintenance might easily cost him more blood than all the previous conquests of Russia put together.

Meanwhile, the Emperor has allotted to Count Woronzoff an undertaking which is possibly less attractive than the governorship of the Bosphorus, but which is decidedly as comprehensive, and, if successfully carried out, will be no less honourable. Woronzoff was commissioned to avenge the honour of the Russian arms, which had been seriously compromised by Grabbe, Klucke, and Neidhardt; he was to subjugate or pacify the independent and hostile races; he was to confer on the peaceable and oppressed population of Trans-Caucasia the same blessings of an upright, gentle, and honest

administration, as he had previously attempted, and partly succeeded in effecting, in the Tartar countries of Southern Russia. Lastly, he was required to purify the Augean stable of corruption and cheating, which had increased to a fearful extent, to the great injury of the army, of the treasury, and of the community in the Caucasian provinces.

To effect the latter purpose, the Emperor conferred dictatorial powers on his Viceroy. The first aim of Woronzoff, in his new sphere, was to avenge the defeat at Itschkeri, and restore the respect of the natives for the Russian military power, which had been shaken. His well-matured and comprehensive expedition through Andy to the heart of the mountains and forests of Great Tschetschina was bloody, and accomplished with heavy losses; nevertheless, it was crowned with success, for Dargo, the residence and retreat of Schamyl, was captured and destroyed, and the magazines collected at that spot were delivered up to the flames.

Woronzoff was raised to the dignity of Prince, and had an interview with the Emperor Nicholas, at Sevastopol, shortly afterwards. What transpired between them has, of course,

never been disclosed ; but it was affirmed at that time at Tiflis, where certain well-informed circles supposed they had a good knowledge of the Count's views, plans, and wishes, that Woronzoff had become convinced, on a closer examination of the Caucasian relations, and of the seat of war, that it was, humanly speaking, impossible to subdue or tranquillize the Eastern Caucasus speedily, but that it was an affair of time and perseverance. It was added, that he had strongly dissuaded the Emperor from great expeditions, though Nicholas, after the fall of Unzula, and the devastation of Aranda, had suddenly reverted to the pugnacious counsels of some of his generals. Instead of this, Woronzoff proposed another system, combining a line of kreposts, with moveable columns, so as to adopt defensive or offensive measures against the tribes living nearest the forts, according to circumstances.

Still, the Prince thought that the success of even this system was a gradual affair of a consecutive nature, in which no change or alteration must be admitted. He maintained that mighty Russia, by summoning all her strength and resources, was unequal to overcome the Cau-

casus at one stroke, but that it was quite capable of reducing the enemy to obedience by exhaustion. It was farther asserted, at Tiflis, that the Prince had often declared that radical reforms were indispensable in the army and the civil service, and that, in order to give the Emperor a thorough insight into the state of the case, he had disclosed to him all the crying malpractices, the whole history of the incredible system of corruption and thieving among the *employés*, which he had elicited from the reports of conscientious men, commissioned to examine into the affair. The Czar had already detected something similar; for example, by means of the senator Hahn, whom he had sent twice into the Caucasus, to examine into the Trans-Caucasian administration. The Czar had also given two examples of punishment, in the case of Baron Rosen, and General Prince Dadian, who had been degraded to the rank of private soldiers. Yet it required the authority of a man like Woronzoff, and the confidence inspired by his noble character, to move the monarch to adopt radical measures, which must of necessity compromise many eminent *employés* in the army and civil service, and many names

belonging to the high nobility. Nevertheless, the Emperor agreed to all the conditions of the Prince, and gave him unlimited authority to do what he thought necessary.

We have ascertained, through private but trustworthy sources, that an immense change has been wrought, since that time, in the Caucasian provinces. An undertaking, which was by many thought to exceed the power of man, has been partially accomplished ; the Augæan stable of corruption and cheating has been partially cleansed. Hundreds of *employés* and officers have been removed from their posts, many were handed over to justice, including two staff-officers of the highest rank, who are to await their verdict and punishment at St. Petersburg. Most district officers and functionaries were driven from their posts, having richly deserved their fate by a shameless fleecing of the natives. Though their successors may not be imbued with better principles, yet the fear which has come over all functionaries in the Caucasus, will deter them from following the same path as their predecessors. Woronzoff has displayed, in his new organization of the country, an energy and a relentless se-

verity against delinquents, of which he had hardly been supposed capable, after his mild rule in Southern Russia ; for, there, he was accused of too much gentleness, too many scruples, and too great magnanimity ; he often hesitated to let culprits endure all the severity of the law. But his new position, and the unbounded confidence shown him by the Emperor in investing him with dictatorial power, appear to have increased the firmness of his character. Woronzoff has attempted a wiser system than all his predecessors in connection with the Circassians, by making large presents and annual donations to the most influential chieftains, by granting considerable commercial advantages to the mountaineers in the Russian markets on the Black Sea and in the Kouban, and by placing no impediments in the way of their slave trade with the coasts of Asiatic Turkey.

A great influence in tranquillising the warlike tribes on the Kouban was effected by his personal appearance at Ekaterinodar, where most of the chiefs from the left bank met him in conference. His lofty and imposing figure, the dignity and amiable majesty of the Russian commander, could not fail to make an impression on those

chivalrous men, who hold external advantages in very high esteem. The great tribe of the Temirgowzi was first won over, and settled down on the Laba, under the guns of the Russian fortresses. Their example was followed by the Beslanejewzi and the Mohoschewzi. At length, even the numerous powerful clan of the Abaseck, reckoning 20,000 warriors, tendered its allegiance. Even the Shapsooks, the chief enemies of the Russians on the Kouban, sent an envoy to Prince Woronzoff, and are at present pouring down in large bodies to the market of Ekaterinodar.

On the Black Sea, the Ubiches and Dschigeths alone appear to retain their old and desperate hatred of the Russians, and to persevere in blockading Gagra, Ardler, and Pitzunda. It must be candidly confessed that the Russian Commander-in-chief purchased the peaceful attitude of the Circassians at the present time, by concessions, which leave a faint hope for the future success of the Russian cause. For these people gain money by the commercial privileges granted them; and an unimpeded intercourse with Samsun and Sinope, secures them a supply of ammunition. Hence the

present tranquillity by no means advances the real subjugation of Circassia ; and the Russians have not advanced a single step in their position on the Euxine and the Kouban. The greatest advantage which they derive from this inactivity of the Circassians, is the prosperity of the Cossack settlements on the right bank of the Kouban, which have severely suffered from the incursions of the mountaineers for half a century. This tranquillity in the Western Caucasus also allows the Russians to concentrate all their military resources in the East. Woronzoff has arrived at the conclusion that negotiations for peace are a loss of time with the fanatical tribes of Daghestan, Lesghistan, and the Tschetschina ; and he has adopted against them a system widely differing from preceding ones. By pushing on the Cossack population from the Terek to the Sundscha, by increasing the stanitzas and outposts there, by endeavouring to thin the woods, and founding a new line of forts and block-houses on the south side of the mountain chain of Andy, and on the banks of the Sulak, he shows distinctly that his plan is evidently to separate the different tribes, to cut off Great Tschetschina to the north from Little

Tschetschina, as well as from Daghestan and Lesghistan to the east and south, and to inclose that focus of the enemy in narrow limits. Schamyl easily detected the danger that threatened him from this system, and his venturesome incursion into Kabardah appears to have been chiefly intended to remove the theatre of war to a more remote district, to occupy the Russians elsewhere, and to give breathing time to the tribes on the right bank of the Sundscha. General Freitag, on whom the Prince has conferred the command of the left wing, operates constantly in the spirit of the system, with circumspection and perseverance. Sudden and splendid results cannot be anticipated from it; but it is probably the most suitable system of operations which can be followed in that region.

The most comprehensive and beneficial measure for which Trans-Caucasia is indebted to Prince Woronzoff, is the suspending of the Russian customs and tolls in favour of all the provinces to the south of the Caucasus. By this act, he has conciliated the friendship of the whole population, and especially the Armenians, through whose hands the whole transit trade

between Persia and Europe used commonly to pass. The rejoicing at Tiflis on account of this measure was boundless. It is reasonably anticipated that this capital of Georgia will now recover a portion of its ancient commercial importance; and that the former prosperity of these impoverished provinces will be in some measure restored. The establishment of a line of steam-boats between Redout-Kaleh and Constantinople, through Trebizond, will be probably the immediate result of the abrogation of this impolitic preventive system ; and the wholesale smuggling trade on the Araxes must be shortly put an end to.

PART II.

GEORGIA, MINGRELIA, AND IMERITIA.

CHAPTER I.

From the Crimea to Georgia—The Trans-Caucasian Metropolis
and its Curiosities.

THE passengers of the Argo, those adventurous heroes, who, armed with the sword and lyre, steered in the grey dawn of history, over the stormy Pontus, to the magic shores of Trans-Caucasia, can scarcely have felt a more ardent desire to explore the mysteries of Colchis, and the golden shores of the Phasis and Rion, than was experienced in later times, by two travellers by the Russian mail, represented by the Author of this book and his Hungarian companion. Nor was it without considerable self-denial, that they had turned their backs in the winter season, to the shores of the Crimea, endeared to all

acquainted with it by the hospitable character of its natives and residents, and to the scholar and historian, by the touching episodes of two virgins immortalized in the muse of Euripides, Göthe and Puschkin. And though the habits of a wandering life may mitigate the sorrows of separation by frequent repetition, the heart must be cold that can leave unmoved, a land inhabited by noble and generous friends, where you have found the heartiest welcome, and been received, not only as a countryman, but even as a relative. Yet a glowing prospect attracted us across the Euxine, and we left in fond anticipation of scientific conquests, in the paradise of Trans-Caucasia.

Our objects were Grusia ! Imeritia ! Colchis ! —the original home of the vine, the abode of lovely women, the cradle of magic, of disinterested love and of revenge, the wondrous land of the Heliad races, celebrated by the lyre of Grecian bards ! It was there that we hoped to find some compensation for the grief we felt at leaving the Crimea. I was already familiar with the features of Trans-Caucasia, through the descriptions of two learned and inquiring

travellers, Nordmann and Stevens, and had received much information from General Rajeroski and other cultivated Russians, whose accounts were more reliable than the gleanings of ephemeral tourists from the west. I had also enjoyed the perusal of the private correspondence of the Russian naturalist, Szowich, whose love for the magic woodland life in Colchis, was stronger than death! When the aged Stevens disclosed to me at Simpheropol, the treasures he had gathered in sturdier years, in the groves and wilds of Georgia, I was seized with, at least, an equal appetite for gain to that which inflamed the Argonauts, whilst braving the terrors of the deep and the charms of the Syrens, in search of the Golden Fleece. At length, unable to resist the roving impulse any longer, we quitted the sweets of repose and the hearth and board of our Crimean friends, and hurried across the straits of Kertch and the Caucasus, with its thousand peaks, in the inclement month of February.

After passing the watershed of the streams, pouring down the southern declivity of the mountains, we descended the course of the

Aragus, and entered the valleys of Georgia. I was impressed with the historic memories of its past, and the radiant beauties which it has retained in all ages. Its lovely landscapes have remained, whilst all human handy-work has well nigh disappeared ; the ancient Colchian civilization, the brilliant and flourishing colonies have vanished, with the race of the Heliades, and like the mysterious monarchy of King Aetes, they only glimmer faintly through history, and through the night of ages as a myth.

It was a cloudy day in March, when we first hailed the land of Grusia. At that period, I was not sufficiently familiar with the Caucasian climate, to appreciate the difference of temperature and scenery, under the same degree of latitude, in spots separated from each other by an elevation of 2000 feet. We were approaching the valley of the Kur, which does not properly belong to Colchis, and my young comrade seemed, like myself, surprised and disappointed, looking in vain for the eternal spring, the flowery carpet, the deep azure heavens, celebrated by the Caucasian bards, to the sounds of the Balalaika.* Not a vestige of

* A kind of lute.

these charms was discernible. On the contrary, our eyes were greeted with a dismal, murky sky, whilst an icy blast whistled in our ears, almost more roughly than the Boreas of the Taurian steppes. The scenery presented leafless trees, and flowerless fields, alternately with bald rocky mountains. Such were the first prospects, that we encountered in entering Georgia. But when to the south of Makhetha, the woods gradually disappeared altogether, whilst the mountains became still more bald, and the immediate vicinity of Tiflis, was covered with a comfortless mantle of snow, my young companion lost all patience, and exclaimed in accents of despair, why did we not await the spring at Simpheropol! there we were at all events, warm, dry and comfortable, whilst here we shall be in want of everything, and as regards botany and etymological research, I fear we shall have a long holiday.

The lamentations of my friend waxed fainter, as we reached the suburb of Tiflis by twilight, and after we had experienced a foretaste of that variegated picture, which burst upon us, in all its magnificence and wonder on the morrow. Our chief business, for the moment,

consisted in securing a good shelter, and a dry receptacle for our luggage, a tiresome necessity to all naturalists travelling in the East. My letters of introduction at Tiflis, were directed to distinguished Russian noblemen, whom I could not importune about lodging hunting. The Russian hotel, was full of strangers. Former travellers, including the Swiss Dubois, speak in high terms of their entertainment at the quarters of Herr Salzmann, a rich German settler, who possesses several capacious houses on the Sand, a faubourg of Tiflis. Yet a friend in the Crimea, had cautioned me against him, adding, "Salzmann is an intriguant, a sycophant, a tuft hunter. He would not scruple to serve the secret police, in order to secure a Tschin, the great object of his ambition. He has not a German heart, every drop of his blood is Russified." I was so frequently and strongly warned to beware of this man, that contrary to my usual practice, I was led to view a stranger in an unfavourable light.

Near the Russian hotel, amidst the crowd of ragged but picturesque Georgians, my eye fastened on the goodly, well-fed proportions of a man whose phlegmatic, but good-humoured

face, and negligent attire, bespoke him to be a German and a Suabian. In fact, I discovered that he was a turner, from Wurtemberg, settled twenty years in the East; who being the only man of the trade at Tiflis, had secured a monopoly in his ornamental work; and besides turning sundry other articles, had managed to turn out half-a-dozen flaxen urchins, who were as like their sire, in ruddy cheeks, appetite, and phlegmatic ways, as the suckling pig to its papa pig. I unburdened my sorrows to this worthy man; and as he had a room to spare, notwithstanding his long family, and was in decided want of ready money, he agreed, gladly, and at once, to receive me and the Hungarian under his roof.

We took possession of our new quarters the same evening; and after regaling our postillion with a *douceur* and brandy, and strengthening our own stomachs with pilaf and kewab, we issued forth to inspect the Caucasian capital. A traveller who has lived several years among Orientals, and has visited some hundreds of their cities, cannot feel the same interest in Eastern life, its magic and poetry, the picturesque and variegated costumes, and the beauty

or grace of the natives, as the man fresh from the prose and monotony of the West. Yet there were so many curiosities and novelties in Tiflis, and the half Persian, half Oriental Christian character of the people, in features, dress, and customs, was so eccentric, even to me, that I stared almost as astonished as my predecessors, who had, perhaps, seen less of the East. The approach of night soon put an end to our stroll. Tiflis is as yet unprovided with a gasometer, which might display the majestic spectacle of its rocky panorama, and the theatrical character of its population, in that enchanted light which makes the streets and squares of Paris and Venice still more fairy-like by night than by day. Yet the introduction of these showy effects of civilization may be more speedily anticipated in the Asiatic provinces of Russia, than the establishment of a just, enlightened and incorruptible administration.

To light a town with gas, only requires a round sum in silver roubles, which the gorgeous tastes of the Russian nobles make of small account. But a strong hand, and a stern will from above, even if they existed in a much

greater degree than is usual on the Imperial throne, would not suffice to kindle the light of intelligence, the fire of humanity, of patriotism, and of honour, in the hearts and heads of the Russian Tschinovniks.

The morning after our arrival, though the sky was still partially veiled with its cloudy canopy, the sun favoured us twice with its appearance, shining brilliantly through breaks in the mist, and proclaiming its Orient glories. I climbed up the nearest rocks and knolls, to obtain a general survey of the city. There are several elevations of this nature close to Tiflis; but none of them appeared to me so advantageously situated as the marl-slate hill, on the left bank of the Kur, which rises above the suburb of the Sand. This hill is crowned by some large barracks, painted yellow. From this point, the eye embraces the complete circuit of the capital of Georgia, which is seen in as great perfection as the city of Rome from San Pietro di Montorio, or the majestic Prague from the Hradschin. With its houses grouped like an amphitheatre; its fortresses, churches, chapels, and palaces; and the mighty stream

whose waters, unfortunately, are neither azure blue, nor emerald green, but of a very unæsthetical and muddy colour, and which sweeps through the city with a rapid current. With these accidents and accompaniments, Tiflis presents a picture that will reward the traveller for a journey of eight hundred miles.

The Georgian metropolis is situated in a basin, inclosed by bald and rather steep mountains, which, being rent asunder to the eastward, by a plutonic eruption, displacing the porphyritic rocks of which they consist, have presented a narrow channel for the waters of the Kur; whereas, to the northward, a wide and distant horizon opens before you, embracing the splendid background of the great Caucasian chain. About the centre of the range, and conspicuous above the other summits, by its towering crags, which assume the form of a camel's hump, the Kasbek stands forth as a Goliath among the icy giants which lift their huge, snow-laden backs above the mists. The amphitheatre of the city ascends at first gradually, and afterwards more abruptly from the north-west to the south-east. In the fore-

ground, extends the suburb of Awlabar, built on the left bank of the river, partly inhabited by German artizans, and crowded with carts, merchandize, and logs of timber, used to construct rafts. On the opposite side of the Kur, the mass of houses constituting the old town, rise in a gentle slope, many of them having grass-grown terraces instead of roofs.

Occasionally you see the solemn form of a Georgian woman, wrapt in a veil, and reminding you of the statues of Roman priestesses, and beside her a goat or sheep cropping the grass, and looking like the victim intended for sacrifice. In the level part of the city, the newly erected public and private buildings, present an imposing appearance. The roofs are often party-coloured, commonly green and red; but straw-colour appears to be the favourite tint of the Russians, and though this dull colour is not very attractive when viewed close at hand, it has a smiling lively look when seen at a distance, especially where these modern Russian buildings are surrounded by dirty brown Armenian and Georgian houses. The barracks are na-

turally the largest and most imposing of the new structures. In a great military empire like Russia, quarters for soldiers are the most essential to secure the prevailing system, and their staring, monotonous walls strike the eye on all sides wherever the Russian eagle has made its nest, even before the green domes of the Greco-Russian churches, whose priests are, next to bayonets and bureaucracy, the most solid supports of the Russian system. The residence of the Russian Governor-general, which stands on the site of the ancient royal palace of Georgia, does not exhibit a degree of splendour proportioned to the dignity of an official, who exercises unlimited authority over a territory larger than Germany and France united. Amongst the more ancient edifices, the churches are only distinguished for their size and their quaint, rather than picturesque forms. Their cupolas, instead of presenting the usual curve, have a pointed and conical shape—a peculiarity of the Armeno-Georgian style of architecture. These domes, rising above the surrounding and humbler edifices, in vast and solid masses, resemble massive spires, and the variegated

colours with which they are painted, contribute not a little in throwing into relief the foreign looking and eccentric stone figures with which the buildings are decorated or disfigured. In proportion as the houses climb the declivity of Mount Solalaki, the scene increases in magnificence, through the diversity of the architecture. The forts and barracks, churches, and chapels, bazaars and caravanserais, gain immensely in picturesque effect, owing to their vast magnitude and exposed position, and owing to the amphitheatrical grouping of a part of the city.

When I compare the principal cities of the old world, renowned for the beauty of their situation, such as Constantinople, Genoa, Naples, Broussa, Prague, Salzburg, Algiers, &c., in all of which I have dwelt some time, with this view of the Georgian capital, I cannot assign the last place to Tiflis. I admit that it wants the diversified scenery of the incomparable panorama of Constantinople, the admirable distribution of its verdant shores, and of its beaming crystal waters, encircling the queen of cities with a sea of gems; nor does it boast the golden and colossal cupolas of the

Stamboul mosques ; the graceful, tapering minarets, and the cypress groves of the cemeteries, with their dim, religious twilight. Nor must we seek at Tiflis for the magic coasts of the Gulf of Naples, with its aged volcano, and the harmonious lines and colouring of Capri and Ischia, dipping into the blue bosom of the waves, and appearing as if made on purpose to delight the artist. But although Tiflis lacks the luxurious vegetation, and the imposing architecture of Broussa, as well as the thousand fountains that make merry music, as they issue from the folds of Mount Olympus ; yet the stern beauty of its rocky environs, the foreign and variegated diversity of its Oriental and European architecture, crowning the lofty banks of a wild mountain torrent, present great and manifold attractions, even surpassing, in grandeur and magnificence, the scenery of Prague, which has some resemblance to that of Tiflis, and is without a rival among the cities of Germany.

Before I pass from the hasty sketches and impressions of my journal, to a minuter description of the localities and people of Tiflis, I pause to remark that I lingered longer at

that city than in any other part of Trans-Caucasia. I made Tiflis my head-quarters, the dépôt of my scientific acquisitions, and the centre of my excursions, owing to its convenient position. A few days bring you from Tiflis to Mount Ararat, to the fire-worshippers, and naphtha springs of Baku on the Caspian, to the Ossetian Alps, and the Colchian paradise on the Black Sea. Nor does any other place offer so many conveniences, as regards the facility of posting and carriage, and intercourse with cultivated men.

I determined, therefore, to secure quarters here for the whole summer, and to share the toil of exploring the country, and making collections with my Hungarian friend. The Governor-general, Herr von Neidhardt, received me as amiably as was compatible with the pedantic character of this Russo-German drill-master. He was a worthy, honest man, of unsophisticated character, just and severe; endowed with sound practical sense, but without superior talent, political penetration, or knowledge of mankind—no magnanimous character, such as Yermoloff, yet an improvement on his predecessors, Rosen and Golowin. Herr von

Neidhardt showed, on every occasion, a friendly interest in my undertakings, and acceded to most of my wishes. He gave me farther introductions, and some Cossacks were assigned to me, for escort and service. I have no cause to complain of him, nor do I wish to pass judgment on one no longer living. The Governor-general directed Herr Frederic von Kotzebue, and the Armenian, Abovian, to render me every assistance during my stay. I also made the acquaintance of two agreeable countrymen, Dr. Noth, and Herr Hake, and received all manner of civilities from Generals Kotzebue and Espejo, the General of the Don Cossacks, the Civil Governor, and the French Consul. I made daily walks through the city, sometimes alone, but commonly accompanied by the Armenian, Abovian, who spoke German like his native tongue.

If I enter here somewhat into details respecting Tiflis, I must be excused on the score of its great political and geographical importance. For it is more than probable that it will be called upon to play a greater historical part in the future, than it has ever done in the past, and that from its towers the Russian eagle will

spread its wings, and commence its conquering flight over the broad empires of Persia and Turkey.

Tiflis owes its origin to the celebrated mineral springs, which gush forth in full volume from the bowels of the earth, on the right bank of the torrent, Tsawkissi, which falls into the Kur, within the walls of the city. It is generally known, that Orientals are still more partial than Europeans to mineral waters, and place greater faith in their virtues. The town, which consisted, probably, in the first instance, of mere sheds and bath-houses, took the name of Tbilis from the springs, and the present is a corruption of the ancient appellation. Tiflis remained an insignificant village till the year 380 of our era. At that period, the Persian governor, Varza Bakur, subdued some Georgian tribes, penetrated into the valley of the Kur, and, delighted with the beauty of the spot, built a castle on the site of the baths. Seventy years afterwards, Vakhtang Gurgaslan, a Georgian prince, became the real founder of the city, and divided it into three quarters; Khalissi, the fortress; Tblissi, the town and baths; and Nissani, the present suburb of that name.

Meanwhile, the royal family of Georgia continued to dwell in its ancient residence at Mtzkhetha, till A.D. 499, when King Datschi, the son of Vakhtang, removed to Tiflis. During the thirteen centuries that followed, the fate of the city shifted from splendour to misery, from prosperity to devastation. It has been, at sundry times, besieged, pillaged, and destroyed, by Persian, Tartar, and Turkish hosts, or by wild Lesghian hordes. The great conqueror, Timur, delivered it up to the fury of his soldiery; but its fate was almost more severe in the year 1795, when a Persian desperado, named Aga Mahomet Khan, occupied the Georgian city, with his Persians, Koords, and Tartars, and converted the greater part of it into a heap of ashes. Since the enduring occupation of Georgia by the Russians, Tiflis has escaped the scourge of war, and has been externally restored and improved, although the destructive Russian tolls and duties were fatal to the prosperity of the inhabitants, by stifling all commercial life and activity.

We have already observed that the mixture of Oriental and European structures, gives a very peculiar character to the town. It is

well known that eastern nations are partial to narrow, shady streets, whilst the Russians like the contrary. These contrasts are presented in many parts of Tiflis. In all parts where Russian builders have been employed, you find space, air, sun and a free prospect; whilst, wheresoever the old architecture has remained untouched, the streets and squares are narrow and dark, although not to the same extent as in genuine Moslem cities. None of the streets are particularly remarkable; but the squares of Tauris and Erivan, encompassed by modern buildings, are distinguished by their size and fine prospect, commanding the valley of the Kur and the Caucasian highlands.

But the most remarkable spot in the city, is the Market Place, which must be crossed in passing from the old to the new town. Its size is insufficient for the immense crowd of market people, with whom it is encumbered, and who consist of Armenians, Georgians, Tartars, Ossetians, Persians, Lesghians, Russians and German colonists. If you mingle with these various groups of people, you hear a complete Babel of tongues,

including the melodious idiom of Spain, which is spoken by the Oriental Jews. The strangest and most uncouth sounds occur in the dialect of the Kasi-Kumyks, which is pre-eminent, even among the wild and startling tongues of the mountaineers, for its deep gutturals and babbling labials, unattainable by the European organs of speech. Tartar forms the universal medium of intercourse between all the people of Trans-Caucasia. My companion being acquainted with Turkish, was able to communicate with the natives, whilst I was reduced to an imperfect colloquy in Russian which is, however, extensively, though superficially circulated in the country, as even the Lesghians understand the Russian numerals and the names of the Russian coins.

The well-known traveller, Hallberg, of Munich, after he had visited the Market Place with me, and had contemplated, admiringly, the immense crowd of people in every variety of picturesque costume, the camels, the foreign looking merchandize, and the variegated scenery of the place, observed to me, that he had never seen so attractive and mixed a population, either in the East or West, save at the market of Cairo. It

is also remarkable that each race brings its peculiar produce to market. Thus, the Georgians from the vicinity, contribute poultry; the Caucasian mountaineers bring game and peltry; the German colonists, vegetables and potatoes, which were almost unknown in Georgia, before their settlement there; Armenian merchants offer coarse stuffs for sale; Lesghians exhibit their burkas; Tartars deal in horses; and Russian soldiers in old clothes and boots.

One street, called the Great, runs from the Bazaar to the square of Tauris; and constitutes the main street of Tiflis, but it is unworthy, both in breadth and decoration, of a royal residence. The lower story of the houses is occupied by narrow, dirty booths, and a great part of the Georgian and Armenian operatives, may be seen working in these open booths, exposed to the public thoroughfare. Tailors, cobblers, saddlers, barbers, and gunsmiths, are especially numerous among these citizens, and the armourers' booths present the most novel and attractive appearance, exhibiting a rich assortment of kinschals, schaschkas, pistols, and firelocks, both of Georgian and Caucasian manufacture. The swords are little

inferior in temper to the celebrated blades of Schiraz and Damascus, and the sheaths, richly decorated with gold, silver, steel and satin, display more magnificence, than those of the Turks and Persians. Besides this main street, I ought to notice another insignificant lane, radiating from the Market Place, very narrow, and dirty, and adorned with a double row of dingy and smoky cook-shops, where most of the poorer market people obtain their meals.

According to a statistical estimate, the number of houses in Tiflis amounts to 3662, of which 37 belong to the government, 572 to the clergy, and the remainder to private persons. The greater number of native proprietors consist of Armenians. The most remarkable, spacious and profitable of all the buildings, are the Bazaar, and the Caravanserai. I admit, that the former, which is situated in the most animated part of the town, between the Market Place and the main street, cannot be compared with those of Constantinople, for size or diversity of merchandize, nor with that of Tauris, for the lively and entertaining character of the crowd that frequents it, but

the Bazaar of Tiflis, is superior to the former in elegance, an advantage which it owes to Russian rule. Nor has the luxurious nature of the goods exposed for sale, fallen off since the deposition of the royal Georgian dynasty. It is true that the choice of silk stuffs, shawls, carpets, &c. is not so great, as at Stamboul, and Tauris, but it presents quite as select specimens of Perso-Indian manufacture, to which the Russian nobles are just as partial as the native Georgian grandees. If you stroll through the Bazaar, which has a considerable analogy to the Passages of Paris, you are addressed and invited in Russian, in the most pressing terms, to walk in and inspect their goods, by the Armenian tradesmen, standing at the door of their shops. The contrast is indeed striking between the officious, flexible, talkative tradesmen of the Tiflis Bazaar, and the serious, dignified, silent and motionless Turks, lounging and smoking on their pillows, in the Bazaar of Constantinople. It is evident that climate and diet are not the only agents in forming and modifying national temperaments, nor can they account for this striking difference between two races, living under the same latitude.

The Caravanserai at Tiflis, is not much inferior in size, to those of the largest commercial cities of Turkey and Persia, and surpasses them in cleanliness and in a certain architectural splendour, for which we look in vain in any Eastern city. Though the influence of the Russian policy may be very oppressive in sundry matters, it has done more good than the contrary, in establishing, cleaning, and repairing the public buildings in the towns of Trans-Caucasia.

There are no fewer than forty-two churches at Tiflis, an excessive number in proportion to the population. Of these, the Gregorian Armenians possess twenty-three ; the Georgians of the Greek confession, twelve ; the Russians, four ; the Greeks proper, two ; and the Catholic Armenians, only one. The Cathedral, Sion, presenting a specimen of the purest Georgian style, is devoted to the Russian form of worship, and decorated with all the splendour which universally characterizes Russo-Greek temples, even in the steppes of the Cossacks. The foundation of the edifice dates back as far as the sixth century. The dome, which was erected by the Georgian King, Gurian, was subsequently destroyed by the Persians, and only restored about

the beginning of the eighteenth century, under Vakhtang V. The church of Metekhi, which was erected as early as 455, under Vakhtang Gurgustan, the founder of Tiflis, exceeds the cathedral in antiquity and interest. This church crowns the hill above the new fortress, in the centre of that quarter of the city, called Nissani. This venerable edifice was converted into a powder magazine, by Shah-Navaz-Khan, a Mohammedan ruler of Georgia, and finally restored to the clergy, at the end of the eighteenth century, by King Heraclius II, who caused the sadly dilapidated building to be repaired. The principal church of the Gregorian Armenians, called Mognini, is inferior to the foregoing churches in antiquity, size, and internal splendour.

A Catholic church, where some Italian capuchins officiated at the time of my residence in Georgia, was distinguished by the taste and elegance of its interior decorations ; though the members of the community were few in number. This church was founded by Catholic missionaries, as early as 1661. When the Persian destroyer, Aga-Mahomed-Khan, took possession of the residence of the King of Georgia, this

church shared the fate of the other christian temples ; it was handed over to pillage and only restored after the liberation of Georgia from the Persian yoke. The Catholic priests enjoyed down to 1845, the same protection under the Russian sceptre, as that which had been extended to them by the kings of Georgia, notwithstanding the difference of creed and discipline. But in the spring of 1845, these priests were suddenly directed, by an Imperial decree, to leave the country, and as they hesitated, appealing to their right of settlement in Trans-Caucasia, and to the Pope, they were dragged away in a most brutal manner under an escort of Cossacks, and by the command of the Governor-general were taken to the nearest sea-port, and thrust on board the first vessel bound for Trebizond. Their spiritual brethren at Gori and Kutais experienced the same fate. This harsh and unjust treatment excited the more surprise under a viceroy, like Herr Von Neidhardt, whose love of equity, religious toleration, and humane disposition, had been conspicuous on all other occasions. But well-informed men maintained that peremptory orders had been forwarded by the special direction of the Emperor, through the head of

the secret police, Count Benkendorff, to Herr Von Neidhardt, instructing him to expel the Catholic priests, forthwith. Besides, the previous churches, we must mention the Georgian convent of St. David, which has stood more than half a century, together with the Armenian convent of St. Stephen, almost as old as the former, founded by the family of Prince Bebutoff, and built on the hill of Avalabar. The Mohammedans have a small and elegant mosque at Tiflis, belonging to the Shüte sect, and situated in the upper part of the town.

With the exception of Sundays and holidays, when attendance on Divine worship is strictly enjoined, especially on the soldiery, I commonly remarked a greater number of women than men, during service, in the Georgian and Armenian churches that I visited. Both sexes were separated. The men are nearer to the high altar ; the women stand or stoop in the background with unveiled faces, throwing the white tschadra (veil) over the head and part of the bust. A considerable number of the Armenian women have adopted Russian customs and the French costume, in which they look very well, though less imposing than in the native dress. The

only men I saw in attendance on mass during the week, were generally old, infirm and poor. The dogmas and discipline of the Georgian and Russian churches, are precisely identical and the decorations of their temple, as well as the pomp of their ceremonies are much more calculated to impress the senses, than the ornaments and worship of the Armenian Church. The high altar of the Sion cathedral is one blaze of gold, silver and variegated pictures of saints ; and the glare of the tapers dispels the natural twilight of the dome. The choristers, who are concealed behind the high altar, and who accompany the full-toned bass solos of the priest with their lovely voices, consist principally of soldiers and soldiers' children, who are trained at an early age to the duty, if they show the least natural aptitude for it. The chant of these concealed choristers pleased me more than the chorus at St. Peter's, in Rome ; though the soft soprano tones at Tiflis were neither produced by woman's voices, nor by eunuchs.

It must be admitted that the Divine service of the Russo-Greek Church is, on the whole, of a very imposing character, and well adapted

to impress the imagination and the senses, especially of the lower orders. The temple and the service combine a wealth of precious metals, and of pictorial display, united to a blaze of tapers, and the most harmonious strains ; whilst the priest, who is attired in gorgeous robes, and adorned with a handsome beard and flowing locks, knows well how to conduct the service in the most striking and picturesque manner. In the Armenian churches, the display is much simpler. The wall in front of the high altar is covered with black cloth drapery, on which a white cross is worked. But here again, worship consists in mere external ceremonies, without the additions of music and ecclesiastical pomp. The snuffling, nasal song of the choristers, has far from a devotional effect. The Armenians appeared to me even greater adepts than the Russians and Georgians in making the sign of the cross. The regular prostrations during prayers, take place according to a certain measure, and, together with the bending of the head before the altar, reminded me forcibly of the Mohammedan form of worship.

Generally speaking, the religion of Eastern Christians, notwithstanding the difference of

dogmas, approaches much more in forms and practice to Islamism, than to the Christianity of the west. In the present day, both religions are a mere tissue of empty forms and ceremonies amongst Orientals, without any application to the life. The essence of religion in the East, consists now in regular visits to the house of God, in a silent or spoken, but purely mechanical mumbling of prescribed forms of prayer, in the imitation of certain attitudes or grimaces during public devotion, and, above all, in the strict observance of fasts. I admit that the votaries of both confessions profess a common belief in one God, and in a beautiful and joyous immortality; but the latter, instead of being regarded as the reward of a virtuous life, as we conceive in the West, as a crown for a noble mind filled with philanthropy, and bearing the trials of life with unshakeable fidelity, is made the requital of a stolid faith, unmoved by any intellectual doubts, of strict observance of the fasts, genuflexions, and postures, prescribed by the priests. To these forms, the Church adds charity to the poor, and, above all liberality to the clergy, as actions especially commendable in the sight of God, and calculated to secure a very choice place

in Paradise. Few traces are to be found in the East of any knowledge of moral teachings of the Gospel or Koran. This was certified to me by close and conscientious observers, who had long held intercourse with all strata of society, and with followers of both religions. It is only among the Turks, Tartars, and Arabs, that you occasionally meet with some aged and devout man, a priest, hermit, or marabout, who, beside knowing and practising the forms of his confession, is acquainted with its moral precepts, and puts them in practice.

Amongst Persians, Koords, and Caucasians, as well as the Eastern Christians, including Armenians, Georgians, Greeks, Nestorians, Ossetians, &c., characters of this kind are very rare. To the common people, the Bible is a closed book, which never engages their attention, curiosity, or affection, and whose comprehension and interpretation they leave entirely to the priests. Hence, the Eastern Christians have no idea of the essence of the religion which they profess, no conception of the dignity and purity of its morality, which they would find much more onerous to practice than the severest regulations of their ceremonial worship.

Thus, they regard a violation of fasting, as a more deadly sin, than hatred and envy, lying and hypocrisy, deception and theft, and they think that the gates of heaven are closed to the most virtuous man, if he has eaten meat on fast days, whilst they are open to robbers and murderers, who have not transgressed against the outward prohibitions of their church. Christianity, as it is now developed as a popular religion in the East, is nothing but a hollow system of forms, which neither elevates nor stimulates, which debases the intellect, and corrupts the heart, and leaves no room for the spirit of love, or that of freedom. Though this judgment may appear severe, every traveller acquainted with the East, will acknowledge that it is just. The very atheists of the French Republic had this in common with the faithful in the East, that they felt the want of flocking together in worship, of elevating their feelings to a vague, mystical mood, in a spacious, dimly lighted hall, and of turning their thoughts to a mysterious Being, when they assembled to worship the busts of Lepelletier and Marat, in the Temple of Reason.

After this digression, we revert to our under-

taking of describing Tiflis, and beg to assure all roving characters who feel an inclination to take up their staff and divert their course to the banks of the Kur, that their fatigues will find an ample compensation in a walk along the roaring torrent of Tsawkissi, up to the new fortress, where they will obtain a marvellous prospect of the panorama of Tiflis, and of its valley, irrigated by the dark waters of the Kur. An eccentric traveller, M. Gamba, formerly French Consul at Tiflis, has presented a sketch of this prospect in his work of travels, but it falls far short of the reality, and gives a very imperfect idea of the diversified scenery, and the indescribably splendid decorations on both banks of the Cyrus, where the city rises up the slopes of the mountains, as a double amphitheatre, and lies spread before the feet of the delighted spectator.

The hill, from which this fine view is obtained, embraces what is called the Government Garden, a public promenade, which rises in the form of a terrace, and being adorned with shrubberies, murmuring streams, and the ruins of ancient buildings, is very inviting for a saunter, notwithstanding the ruggedness of the

paths. Fresh verdure is, moreover, somewhat rare in the vicinity of Tiflis, which is bereft of woods and meadows, and the visitor to this public walk may happen occasionally to be favoured with the song of a nightingale, though singing birds are not so numerous at Tiflis as those grey lizards which threw M. Dubois into ecstasy, but were probably nothing more than the common *stellio Caucasicus*.

We have previously observed that the palace of the Governor-general is built on the site of the royal palace of Georgia. The entrance-hall is surrounded by a long row of arcades. Chardin gives a circumstantial account of the old palace, built by Rostom, as it appeared in the last century. The present structure has undergone a complete metamorphosis at the hands of Russian architects, and exactly resembles the usual stereotyped style of public buildings throughout Russia. At each corner of the edifice are two niches, containing statues of Mars and Minerva, which the natives take to be General Paskiewitsch and his wife. The interior of the palace, which is furnished entirely in the European style, presents nothing remarkable, but behind the building you are ushered

into a garden arranged with taste, carefully kept and adorned with fountains, arbours, summer-houses and hermitages, and offering the grateful shade of plane and fig trees. The inmates of the palace are indebted to the lady of the former Governor, Baron von Rosen, for the elegant arrangement of this garden, which is a real god-send in so dry, and especially in summer, so hot a country as Georgia.

On the left bank of the Kur near the suburb of Awalabar, is situated a tomb adorned with pillars, and supposed to contain the remains of St. Abo, a martyr highly venerated by the people, who suffered death for his faith at the hands of Persian executioners. The bath-house erected on the spot where the hot springs issue from the soil, and frequented by all classes with equal favour, deserves a special notice. The temperature of the water amounts to thirty-six degrees of Reaumur, and the baths are less patronised by men than by the fair Georgian women, who pass half their days in them, hoping to prolong their youth and preserve their beauty, by ablutions. The mode of bathing has much analogy with that practised at Constantinople and Broussa, but

the Georgian bath attendants seem even still more dexterous than their brethren of the craft elsewhere, and a man who has once resisted the shock of the first violent manipulation, will find the Oriental system much more refreshing than that of the West, and will gladly subject himself two hours per week to the rubbing and kneading of the Tiflis bath people, who can probably show more numerous and surprising specimens of their healing art, than the whole medical faculty of the Russian empire.

Tiflis possesses several good educational establishments. At the time of my visit, the gymnasium had good teachers, but an indifferent director. No fault could be found with the mode of tuition, save that the unfortunate boys were plagued with too many lessons, and that their attention was distracted by too many subjects. No less than seven languages were taught there, including Russian, Latin, Georgian, Armenian, Tartar, German, and French. Notwithstanding any amount of capacity or ardour for study, a certain confusion of ideas is unavoidable under these circumstances. There is also an establishment for young ladies,

founded by Princess Paskiewitsch, and placed under the superintendance of a Russian and an English lady. The daughters of noble families were received in it for two hundred silver roubles per month, they were taught French, besides the Russian and Georgian languages, and I was assured that the system of tuition was sensible, and their progress considerable. I was also informed that the Armenian girls showed much more quickness and aptitude than the Russian and Georgian maidens. An agricultural school was founded under the administration of Baron Rosen, and among the private establishments, the Armenian Abowian, who was afterwards made director of the district school at Erivan, was of infinite service at Tiflis, by his personal kindness and by stimulating the studious ardour of his young pupils. I often visited his school, and was enchanted to hear his young Armenians and Georgians talk and write German and recite passages from Göthe and Schiller, with the greatest accuracy. Unfortunately this excellent institution was closed on the removal of M. Abowian.

CHAPTER II.

Life in Tiflis—The Georgian and Armenian Women—An Armenian Marriage—Easter—Street-singing and Story-tellers—Poverty—Social Entertainments at Tiflis.

ACCORDING to statistical estimates, the population of Tiflis amounted in 1842, to more than twenty-six thousand souls, including the employés and the Russian garrison. Unfortunately, the national elements of this population are incorrectly given in the Russian lists, and I learnt from good authority, that the Armenians are more numerous than all the other races united, and form more than three-fifths of the entire number of residents and natives. The Georgian, is, however, the prevailing language. The nobles constitute a tenth of the whole population, and there are nearly three hundred scions of princely houses in the country.

Although the Armenians and Georgians are not distinguished by any difference of dress, a practised eye detects both nationalities at a glance, by their peculiar carriage and countenance, which is generally handsomer, more decided and manly, in the case of the Georgians. The features of the Armenians are gentler, softer, and more intelligent, and a sly expression can be almost as frequently detected in their physiognomy, as in that of the Persians, amongst whom it is the prevailing expression. The Imeritians, who reside in, or visit Tiflis, in considerable numbers, are a Georgian tribe, and resemble the Georgians; only their complexion is somewhat more swarthy, their attire is less cleanly, and their hair falls in wild and uncombed locks beneath their singular head-dress, consisting of a quaintly shaped cloth rag, forming a striking contrast to the tall, sugar-loaf fur cap of the Persians and Georgians. The Tartars are even more numerous than the Imeritians, though they do not constitute a part of the resident population, but come and go like the Imeritians, and never stay very long, unless detained by commercial transactions. They speak the Turkish-Tartar idiom, which is the prevailing

dialect throughout Western Asia, and is understood by almost all the Caucasian tribes, corresponding to the *lingua franca* of the Levant. Although these Tartars undoubtedly present much similarity in character and customs to the Turks, and belong to the same race and religion, they are inferior to the latter in loyalty, fidelity and magnanimity.

They bear still less affinity to the tame and peaceful character of the Crimean Tartars : and although they have lost the savage shyness of their nomadic character, and are bent under the yoke of Russian military discipline, yet they have retained a more manly and warlike spirit than the Tartar population of Southern Russia. Nor are they so easily broken in to the scourge of the Russian police, and to the vexations of the custom's officers, as the remaining part of the inhabitants.

Tiflis commonly contains a considerable number of Persians and Turks, especially at those seasons when the caravan trade is most active. These visitors, who were attracted to Georgia by the love of gain and speculation, were more numerous before the introduction of the

new Russian system of customs, whereas, at present, the stream of the caravan trade follows the road by Trebizond and Erzeroum, to Persia and Central Asia.

Among the more occasional visitors to Tiflis, may be observed specimens of Ossetians, Circassians, Lesghians, Kasi-Kumyks, Lasians, Suanetians and Koords. The Ossetians, with whom the reader has formed acquaintance at a previous page, descend from the Caucasian highlands, to serve for a season, as journeymen in Tiflis, like the Kabyles at Algiers. But the delights of a town life are not able to seduce them from their affection for their mountain homes, and as soon as they have scraped together a few winnings, they hurry back to the wild freedom of their highlands.

The Circassian warrior is seldom seen in the streets of Tiflis, and is immediately distinguished in the crowd by his knightly form, the noble profile of his countenance, whose expression bespeaks manly boldness and energy, rather than a mild and yielding disposition, bears a greater resemblance to the statue of Mars than to that of Apollo. With firm and

haughty step, the Circassian stalks through the crowd, and all, including the drunken Cossack, make way for him, though the warlike highlanders do not always carry arms about them. The majority of the Circassians, whom I saw at Tiflis, consisted of chieftains, or of influential Usdens, of confederate or subdued tribes, who had come down to pay their respects to, and obtain, perhaps, some presents from the commander-in-chief of the Russian army.

We must repeat that the Eastern Caucasians, and the different Lesghian tribes, who speak very various idioms, cannot be compared with the Circassians for harmony of form, imposing carriage, and beauty of features. They are commonly shorter, of less noble bearing, and frequently excessively thin and slight. Their complexion is more swarthy, their eyes are not so large, commanding, and fiery, the celebrated eagle profile is less common among them, and their physiognomy might be more correctly compared to the hawk or the vulture. I grant that the Eastern Caucasians seen at Tiflis, consist chiefly of the poorer classes, especially traders in game, cattle, burkas, &c.

I formed a more intimate acquaintance with one of these burka traders, named Abduraman-Beg, belonging to the tribe of the Kasi-Kumyks. Abouvian, the Armenian, was kind enough to bring him several times to my house, and he gave us much useful and interesting information, relating to the history and manners of his tribe. This man assured us that no such thing as poetry occurs in the language of the Kasi-Kumyks, that music was quite unknown in his tribe, and that his countrymen never sing. If this assertion of Abduraman be correct, the Kasi-Kumyks are the only people in the three hemispheres that I have visited, to whom nature has denied the sense of tune. The very Esquimaux, floating about on their icebergs, among the mists of the Pole, are not without their wild music, which seems a gift of kindly nature to all nations, to prolong youth, mitigate grief, and form a universal language, the vehicle of love and pleasure. This Caucasian tribe would form a single exception. It would still have to take lessons from the birds and winds of Heaven, and would be the dullest of people among the most glorious scenes of nature, and even less imaginative and

inventive than the odious Calmucks of the steppe, or any other Eastern tribe.

The Koords, as well as the Lasians, only appear in Tiflis singly and occasionally, as birds of passage. Sometimes the visitors consist of chieftains, who descend, to make arrangements with the Russian Government, for the settlement of their tribes in the border provinces. Occasionally you meet with adventurers, or ill-starred chieftains, who have lost all influence and power in their clan, and seek to regain their authority, by the assistance of the Russian Government. Not unfrequently, strangers undertake a journey to the capital of Georgia from the borders of Persia and of Turkey to satisfy their curiosity, or with the hope of making their fortune, like other lucky adventurers, who have succeeded in obtaining rich presents, or good appointments from the Russian Government, by their imposing bearing and ready impudence. Mingrelians and Suanetians are also seen at Tiflis. Both tribes are of Georgian origin, but remarkably different in features and character. The Mingrelians are handsome men, with noble features, velvety skins and fair

complexions, rivalling the fairest races of northern Europe; whilst their gentle and peaceable character corresponds to their physical advantages. The Suanetians, who inhabit an elevated table-land to the north of Colchis, cannot boast of the delicate rosy tint that adorns the complexion of the Mingrelians, and the expression of their countenance approximates more closely to the manly and imposing beauty of the Circassians. The Suanetians are the most warlike and courageous of all the Christian populations of the Caucasus.

The fifty years of Russian rule, under which Georgia has now continued, have naturally left considerable traces of their influence, in the manners of the citizens, and especially of the fair sex. Under the sway of their native dynasty, the Georgian women lived in strict seclusion, and never appeared abroad, nor did they even display their unveiled faces at church. At public or domestic festivities, banquets, marriages, &c., both sexes remained strictly separate, and French fashions, as well as the books, newspapers, music and dances of the west, were unknown in Tiflis, at that period.

During the first years of the Russian occupation, the military and civil functionaries had an unenviable position; being entirely debarred from all intercourse with the fair sex. It was only very gradually, that the Georgians became reconciled to their foreign conquerors, though they acknowledged the same faith. This reserve lasted as long as the opinion prevailed, that the Russian rule in Trans-Caucasia was transitory, and that it would give way before the attacks of the great Mohammedan empires in the south, or of the mountain tribes to the north. But when the Georgian population discovered its error, and observed on which side was the strongest arm, in the wars of Muscovy with Persia, Turkey and the Highlanders of the Caucasus, it put off its reserve, and, at length, became reconciled with the conquerors, though it was never entirely forgotten that at one period Georgia was the ruling power in that region. The Georgian nobility form a large body, which had already declined considerably, even previous to the Russian occupation, and having lost a large share of their originally proud spirit, they were very solicitous to obtain Russian decorations and appointments,

and bowed the neck very humbly before the representative of the Russian autocrat, yet without carrying their fawning and cringing propensities to the same extreme as the Armenians. A good many sons of the old noble houses, whose titles and dignities were acknowledged by the Russian government, passed into the imperial service, and several of them, such as Bagration, Dadian and Argutinski, have obtained a just celebrity in many of the battle fields of Europe, as well as in the Caucasus.

Many Russian officers and *employés* have contracted matrimonial alliances with the noble and wealthy families of the country; and this practice has become so frequent within the last ten or twenty years, that there are but few noble houses at Tiflis which are not attached to their conquerors by the ties of wedlock, as well as those of interest.

Even under the administration of Yermoloff, whose commanding genius awed the Georgians into obedience, they were already won over to the side of Russia; but the addition of female influence was wanting to strengthen the bond. It was only after General Paskiewitsch had been

appointed Governor that a few ladies of the higher classes of Georgia appeared in the apartments of the royal palace, attired in the European fashion. The number of the fair frequenters of assemblies and balls augmented under the administration of Baron von Rosen, and still more under that of General Golovin, who had a weakness for splendour, and for the fair sex. At his entertainments, you had the opportunity of seeing most of the beautiful Georgian and Armenian women of princely or gentle blood, unveiled. French costumes found favour with them, and Parisian fashions obtained the exclusive upper hand, especially among the fair Armenians. The native ladies became ultimately so enamoured of western splendour, customs and amusements, that it almost excited scandal among their fathers and husbands. But the apartments of the palace were less frequented under the pedantic administration of Herr von Neidhardt, a hospitable family man, but a foe to all extravagance. The old Georgian nobility, which had not quite lost all its pride, was offended at this neglect ; and the fair Georgians resented the affront in various ways.

Though much progress has been made in the

emancipation of women in Georgia, yet the people have retained a shade of eastern seclusion. Save when they visit the church, and the bath, or frequent public festivities, Georgian women of respectability are seldom seen abroad, though it is not necessary to enter the houses, in order to have specimens of Georgian beauty. I admit that most of the women seen in the streets, wrapt in tschadras, are old and ugly persons or domestics; but at church, and on festive occasions, the Georgian princesses appear unveiled, and on foot. Yet their beauty is commonly beneath its reputation. Their nose, which is commonly curved, and of a very peculiar shape that may be styled Georgian, is generally disproportionately large, and destroys the symmetry of the features.

The universal practice of painting and blackening the eyebrows, is another offence against the taste of Europeans. I admit that their black eyes are not deficient in fire, but they lack expression and soul. Almost all Georgian women have luxuriant, glossy black tresses, falling down in tasteful and ornamental plaits beneath their gold embroidered caps. But, if we except their head-dress, their beautifully

braided hair, and the elegant drapery of their veil, which is clean and spotless, even among the poor, the national female costume is fantastic and tasteless. In no country is so much money and ornament lavished on costume, in proportion to the income of the people, as in Georgia. The decorations of ladies of gentle birth, consist of precious stones, pearls, gold, Cashmere shawls, satin and silk ; whilst the poorer women seek to dazzle by their gaudy and showy selection of colours. Many times have I been astonished, whilst strolling through the narrow, dismal lanes of the poorer quarter of Tiflis, to see a beautiful woman, splendidly adorned with a variety of artificial charms and variegated attire, sitting or standing at the gate of a broken down house, or on some ruinous terrace, overgrown with weeds, and covered with dirt. When viewed at a distance, these gaudy and picturesque dames or damsels, with their theatrical costume and attitudes, look like the fairies or princesses of the ruinous palaces from which the present hovels standing in their site have been formed. It is uncommonly interesting to pay a visit to the most deserted and dilapidated parts of the capital, on Sundays or Saints'

days, when the Georgian and Armenian women make a point of displaying all their finery.

It is a notorious feature of the Oriental character, that much greater value is attached by Asiatics, to external show, such as the number of retainers, arms, horses, &c., than to the comforts of a home, social enjoyments, and the indulgence of the table. The taste and disposition of Europeans in general, and of the German colonists in particular, is precisely the reverse. The latter cut a deplorable figure by the side of the natives in their gorgeous apparel; but our Teutonic friends dwell in convenient and substantial houses, forming a great contrast to the native hovels. The fare of the Georgian and Armenian peasants is also very frugal; whilst the Suabians revel in delicacies. Yet the natives readily submit to any privations, provided their women can sport a spotless *tschadra*, clean *nepkavi* (wide drawers), and embroidered slippers; and whilst the men can stalk to church, or lounge about in their elegant *tschoks* (over-coats with loose sleeves), and *gkhalkuks* (under-coat), of fine cloth or silk.

Though I did not enjoy very numerous opportunities of meeting Georgian ladies at

Tiflis, yet, on two occasions at Easter, and during the military games in the plain of New Tiflis, in the month of May, I saw the whole fashion and beauty of the capital crowded together, as at Rome, in the Corso, during the Carnival. Nevertheless, I was doomed to disappointment, the effect produced by an assembly of Georgian beauties, not equalling their reputation, or our expectations. The charms of their raven locks, glowing eyes, pearly teeth, splendid attire, and elegant figures, were quite neutralized by the copious use of paint, and by the excessive size of their noses. Nor was any intelligence or feeling to be detected in their unmeaning faces.

I was lucky enough to see a Georgian lady dance on one occasion, at a ball of Herr von Neidhardt. The figurante was a young princess of a charming form, though boasting the usual and disproportionate amount of nose. Her hair, which was unusually beautiful, fell in countless luxuriant tresses beneath her veil, and half covered her bust. Her dress of grayish brown silk only partially revealed her bosom—two pale red silk patches being introduced to correspond to the natural shape of the

breasts. Her slender waist was encircled by a pink girdle: and yet, notwithstanding the superiority of her picturesque costume over the French fashions of the Russian ladies, the eye derived little pleasure from the exhibition, owing to her total want of grace, and the stiff and lifeless expression and attitudes of this Eastern princess.

On another occasion, I encountered a young Armenian lady, of equal beauty, and as splendidly attired, walking with her husband in the immediate vicinity of Tiflis. When I expressed my admiration of her charms to my companion, in rather enthusiastic language, I was surprised to see the pair look back, smiling, and to hear the Prince, who may have learnt the tongue from the Suabian colonists, address me in good German, and in a sarcastic tone, saying: "Do you admire my wife? Oh, how pretty!"

During the administration of Baron Rosen, the salons of Tiflis were graced with the presence of the wife of the legitimate heir to the throne of Georgia, Prince Alexander, son of the last King George. This lady, who was reckoned one of the first beauties in the country, was the daughter of a noble Armenian of Erivan, and fell

into the hands of the Russians in the last Persian war. The Georgian Pretender, who would never consent to resign his right to the throne, and who wandered about from Persia to Turkey, stirring up those states to declare war against Muscovy, claimed his bride, after the conclusion of peace. Field Marshal Paskiewitsch did not oppose the claim, and gave permission to the lady to depart; but she lingered at Erivan, perhaps being loathe to leave her parents, and share the fugitive life of her husband, and relying on the pledged word of the Russian authorities, that she was at liberty to go whenever she pleased.

Meanwhile, Paskiewitsch was succeeded by Baron Rosen, who, on a renewal of the claims on the part of the Prince, applied to St. Petersburg for farther instructions. The Supreme Government, which was not cognizant of her presence in Georgia, did not think itself bound by the word of Prince Paskiewitsch, and ordered the lady to be sent to St. Petersburg. The dismay and indignation of the Princess, on receiving this intelligence, were indescribable. She had hitherto lived a secluded life in the harem; and, supported by the tears and

complaints of her mother, she at first refused to submit. But, when the Russian authorities threatened violence, she yielded, came to Tiflis, and was gradually and gently initiated into European ways by Baroness Rosen. The flatteries and attentions she received were not lost upon her.

By degrees, she became accustomed to European manners, and appeared with unveiled face, in the company of men. Nor was the sacrifice painful, as it soothed her vanity, by securing general admiration. After a prolonged residence at Tiflis, she started for St. Petersburg ; and it is reported, that she passes her time so pleasantly at the Imperial Court, that she feels no inclination to return to Trans-caucasia.

The fame of magical beauty ascribed in the East and West, and especially in poetry, to the fair Georgians, has partly arisen from the general, but erroneous notion, that the beautiful odalisks of the Turkish harems, are commonly of Georgian or Circassian origin. All the beautiful slaves brought to the Turkish markets on the Black Sea, are represented as Georgians. But we have ascertained, from the traders themselves, that most of these unfortunate

creatures are brought from Lasistan, Guria, and Mingrelia. I admit that the inhabitants of those districts are of the Georgian stock ; but they differ as much from the proper Georgians, as Italians from Spaniards, or Germans from Swedes. It is the blood of these modern populations of ancient Colchis, which has mixed much more freely with the Turkish, than even that of the neighbouring Circassians. And it is well to remember, that these Colchian tribes of Georgian descent, are far handsomer than the genuine Georgians ; and that they carry off the palm of beauty from all the Trans-Caucasian families.

The beauty of the women of Georgia, Colchis, and Circassia, would be more appreciated by the sculptor than by the poet ; too frequently it is but a lifeless image, lacking even the attractive girdle of Aphrodité. The Graces are foreign deities in the East, and in the regular, but inexpressive features of Oriental women there is usually a total lack of those first and greatest of female charms—sentiment and soul.

No other European nation rivals the Russians in their enthusiasm for contracting foreign alliances. German peasant girls are almost as

much in request as the handsomest, and noblest Georgian and Armenian ladies, and whilst the Russian nobles intermarry with the Trans-Caucasian aristocracy, Muscovite serfs in Southern Russia steal the daughters of Tartars, and the Kouban Cossacks elope with Circassian maids. It is a curious fact, that notwithstanding these numerous intermarriages and alliances, even with German blood, the offspring is always genuine Russian—a fact which testifies to the solid energy of the Slavic race. As Russians look for different qualities in their wives from those in request with the more civilized nations of the West, these alliances are less unhappy than might have been anticipated. Whereas a Frenchman would find the fair Georgians wanting in grace, a Roman in dignity, a Spaniard in glowing enthusiasm, a German in sentiment, the Russian lives in happy contentment with the charms of his consort. But after what I have seen of Oriental women, I would not advise any cultivated Western to go to the East, bent on matrimonial speculations.

Through the kindness of M. Abowian, I was enabled to witness an Armenian wedding. A young man of the Gregorian confession, was

about to marry the daughter of an opulent family, who gave him the preference, because he had just been decorated. We have already remarked that no town, save St. Petersburg, is agitated by such a feverish longing for orders and decorations as Tiflis. Many wealthy Armenians have given ten thousand roubles to wear a Stanislaus order of the fourth class, in their button-hole. The bridegroom, exhibiting his shining coin on his breast, received us at the door, and conducted us to a room containing all the male visitors, who were drinking tea. After this operation was concluded, we ventured to approach the women, who were naturally dressed in all their finery for the occasion. The bride, an insignificant figure, with a pale, insipid face, sat in front of a particular table, surrounded by her girlish friends. The studied indifference of her expression, heightened the effect of her naturally unmeaning features ; but I was informed that a frigid expression was regarded as dignified and suitable on such occasions, and that all brides were expected to assume it. The ceremonies began with the presentation of the bridegroom's gifts, consisting of ornaments and splendid

dresses. These articles were placed on the table in front of the bride, besides two immense loaves of sugar, destined for the priests. After a lengthy prayer, the priest blessed the dresses, and then he chanted a prosy hymn, in unison with his ghostly colleagues. Thereupon a part of the ornaments were attached to the bride, by the girls. During this ceremony, a jovial Armenian, in Russian uniform, succeeded in extracting a smile from the bride, by his comic grimaces.

Refreshments were introduced at this time. The company chatted, jested, laughed, and invigorated their stomachs, preparatory to the tedious and drowsy ecclesiastical ceremonies at church.

The marriage service took place at midnight, and lasted one hour, consisting in the mumbling of prayers, monotonous chants, antics and grimaces of all kinds. Among other things, the happy couple were adorned with two gold crowns, by the priest's hands. After the company had been worked up to a most edifying and exhausted condition, they withdrew to the bridegroom's house, headed by a band.

A score or two years ago, before the old

prejudices were shaken, the sexes were kept quite separate at marriage festivals, the women appearing with veiled faces, and none daring to dance before the bridegroom. Now, it is different, and the handsomest and most skilful dancers willingly exhibit before the whole company. But though most of these Armenian women were draped in their floating veils, their solo dances could not be compared with those of Roman and Andalusian females, as regards dexterity, passion and poetry. Even during the exhilaration of this exercise, their movements never lost their usual stiffness, nor were their faces less insipid than on other occasions.

Mademoiselle Kurganoff, the daughter of a wealthy Armenian, in favour with Prince Pas-kiewitsch, was the only exception. She had a tall and graceful figure, and her very handsome face was often lighted up by a roguish smile, that contrasted admirably with the stony expression of her associates. She was the most accomplished gentlewoman in the room, which could be immediately detected from her manner and looks. An Armenian, who was a staff officer in the Russian army, offered me a seat next to his

wife, who spoke French ; but I was sadly disappointed in my hopes of having some rational intercourse with her. Dull, and unintellectual, like most of her countrywomen, our conversation soon came to an end. The good lady understood nothing, save the commonest and most trivial matters and she could not comprehend the drift of my questions, unless they related to dress, eating, the marriage, or other common-place affairs. I was delighted to hear the signal for supper, in the hopes of being relieved from my *tête-à-tête* with this charming female. During the meal, the sexes were actually separated in different rooms, the bridegroom alone enjoying the privilege or misfortune of eating alone with all the ladies. I understand that during the lively ceremony, he was seen to cast occasional tender glances at his bride, resembling those of a hawk at a turtle dove.

The banquet was sumptuous, and exhausted all the resources of the Armenian and Russian *cuisine*. Even champagne flowed in copious streams, though each bottle costs four silver roubles (about twelve shillings) at Tiflis. The gaiety of the evening was promoted by a noisy band of music as well as by the luscious nectar

of Epernay. My neighbour at table happened to be an Armenian, who concealed a heart glowing with patriotism under the Russian uniform, and who indulged in pathetic lamentations about the oppression and crying injustice endured by his countrymen. On rising from table, both sexes met again. All the presents of relatives and friends, consisting chiefly of money, were counted by the priest, and laid on a dish before the bride. Even before the name of the donor, and the nature of the gift were announced, you could guess its value by the expression of the priest's face. If it was gold that was placed in the holy man's palm, his countenance assumed an expression of indescribable beatitude. This operation, which gave no favourable impression of Armenian delicacy, concluded the marriage festival for the guests. Respecting the ensuing mysteries, into which the bridegroom alone was initiated, I received some very comical statements, which I think it most discreet to withhold.

Easter offers the most favourable opportunity for obtaining a good idea not only of the *beau-monde*, but of the whole population of Tiflis, whom you meet in the streets and squares,

during the celebration of this festival, which is regarded by all the Christian communions as the most important in the year, and is frequented even by crowds of Mohammedan Tartars. Independantly of the splendour of the religious services in the different churches, of the military parade, and the various games and amusements, there is another reason which explains the general jubilee excited as soon as the report of the cannon is heard at midnight. This very superstitious race is liberated at Easter from its long and severe fast; and all the friends of good living have abundant occasion to rejoice at their happy release.

The market was literally crammed, the previous evening; thousands of beautiful lambs, with snowy-white fleece, were offered to the poorest even of the crowd, and I saw the very beggars in rags, bargaining with Tartars and Armenians for this delicate morsel. When you behold the innocent and confiding faces of those pretty creatures, you cannot avoid feeling prejudiced against a Christian festival that is initiated by such cruel slaughter. The carnage is generally over when the midnight guns announce the beginning of the festival, and all

the evening is devoted to preparations for the carousal, which commences soon after the signal. Even if the crash of the artillery had not awoke me, I could not have slept during the exclamations of jubilee and rejoicing that greeted the ear on all sides. The whole population, friends and strangers, fell into each others arms, with the words : "Christ is risen!" The General embraces his soldiers, the Prince his porter, the Lord his serf. You are not free for a second from the danger of this fearful kissing infliction. Such is the custom in the Russian, Greek and Georgian churches, and the other confessions have gradually adopted the fashion. Women and girls suffer their cheeks to be pressed by the lips of their acquaintance, and it is only Russian ladies of rank who are privileged to receive the salute on their hands. Even the Great Czar himself, kisses his grenadier sentinel at St. Petersburg. This practice would have something touching in it, if it were not merely mechanical, and if it were accompanied by even a shadow of brotherly love. Unfortunately, it is little more than an empty form, prescribed by the Church.

After the termination of divine service, the

devout population return to a sumptuous meal. The anxiously expected flesh-pots present a choice supply of delicacies, and besides the eternal roast lamb, immense quantities of ham (a favourite Georgian joint,) are consumed. Teeth, lips, gums and tongue are the most active members on Easter Sunday in Georgia. There is no end of kissing, biting and chewing, and the Georgians, who are commonly very sober, commit more offences against diet on this day, than throughout the remainder of the year. There is an indescribable hissing and seething, in dishes and pots, before the huge kitchen fires. The public eating-houses are besieged all day, and present a happy and harmonious conclave of Ossetians, Georgians, Armenians and Cossacks. The savoury messes have great attractions for all save the people of Western Europe, who are used to cleaner dishes. Crowds of Ossetian, Armenian and Georgian beggars, porters and vagabonds, seated in a ring, round a common dish, are not over-scrupulous, if some of their crumbs fall back in the common receptacle. The bazaar, and all the shops are closed. All Tiflis is in holiday attire, and perambulates the streets,

during the interval between the heavy meals. Thousands of Easter egg-breakers collect in the market, and it is probable that in proportion to the population, no town in the world is so passionately addicted to egg-breaking matches. The children have also their separate carousals, but the women are satisfied with less active pastimes, and with the display of their charms and finery. On all sides, you see them seated in groups gazing at the different entertainments which appeared to us wanting in originality and noisy gaiety.

The athletic sports in the month of May are more stirring than the Easter festival, and are frequented by the most skilful horsemen of the neighbouring nations. Tartars, Georgians, Armenians, Don and Line Cossacks, emulate each other, and display a dexterity in the saddle seldom rivalled elsewhere. They throw the lance, fire off their pistols at full gallop, swing their swords, and represent sham fights, all according to the practice of their tribe, and with special shouts or cheers. These displays give the spectator an excellent idea of the nature of cavalry combats in the Caucasus. The usual theatre for these exhibitions is the plain near

the German colony of New Tiflis, which is, at such seasons, frequented by thousands of sight-seers in droschkies and carriages, on horseback and on foot. The women are said to be as passionately devoted to witnessing these warlike exercises as the men. Yet they are far from resembling the fair Germans at ancient tournaments, or the ladies of Castille at bull-fights. The gallant horsemen of Trans-Caucasia are not stimulated or rewarded by the approving glance and smile, or the thrilling plaudits of the fair spectators. I saw the Georgian ladies gazing dumb and insipidly at the display ; nor did their unmeaning faces express any enthusiastic sympathy.

Public story-tellers, and bards, called Ki-koakoa in the Caucasus, are not so numerous at Tiflis as in Persia, and more among the mountains. They commonly consist of poor Tartar ballad singers, chanting Turkish imitations of Persian poets, or Arabian tales. They appeared very wretched, and excited little notice or charity ; being surrounded by a few young vagabonds, who listened without bestowing a kopeck upon them.

Generally speaking, there appears to be less

benevolence and charity at Tiflis, than in the Mohammedan cities ; but more misery and poverty, or, at all events, more appearance of distress.

Save in the States of the Church, and the kingdom of Naples, I never saw such troops of beggars as at Tiflis. The Russian police only allows them one day in the week to ask for alms. But on those days, the eye is distressed with a fearful spectacle of human suffering when hosts of starving, sickly, emaciated cripples, and unfortunates of all sorts, flock through the streets, knocking at the doors, and whilst announcing their misery in a chorus of doleful ejaculations, seek to move the pity, of, and obtain relief from their more fortunate fellow-citizens. So great is the number of the indigent, and so distressing their poverty, that the gentlest heart, and readiest hand, can do little to relieve such a mass of misery. As at Naples, and in Sicily, the mind and eye become gradually hardened, and used to the deplorable deformities of wholesale mendicity, and look with callous feelings at starving multitudes. It is singular, that the maimed, the aged, and the blind, do not attract so much sympathy as those

shameless women who belong to the lowest class, and who, concealing their faces with the tschadra, sit in the middle of the streets, with a wooden plate before them. Men of respectability seldom pass these women, who are ashamed to ask for alms, without dropping a gift into their plate.

Many families, even of noble rank, are reduced to great indigence. I heard of Armenian and Georgian princes, who, but for the appointments or allowance of the Russian Government, would be obliged to resort to mechanical, or still more revolting pursuits, to avoid the pangs of famine. Near Katharinengfeld, I knew a princely peasant; and not far from Elizabeththal, the Armenian prince Gurganoff has become a miller. Some adventures of a tragic-comic nature have occurred between the Russian police and the Georgian nobility, whom the Emperor has allowed to retain their former title and rank. Thus, a coachman was once arrested at the square of Tauris, because he had been uncivil to a Russian *employé*. The police inspector caused the victim to be bastinadoed; and when the latter exclaimed, that

he was a knäs, (prince,) and appealed to the ukase, which prohibits the nobles from corporal punishment, the inspector ordered him to receive fifty additional stripes, for impudent assumption of the princely dignity. Yet the unlucky coachman proved, subsequently, that what he had advanced was correct, but he received no reparation for his stripes.

Living at Tiflis is not dear, if you know how to proceed. Most articles of consumption are reasonable, including cereals, especially rice and vegetables, supplied by the German settlers. Even delicacies, such as poultry, game, and particularly pheasants, are cheaper than in Germany. The Caspian Sea offers an abundance of fish, which are brought to market, fresh in winter, and salted in summer. Caviare is a favourite dish with the natives and Russians. Wine is brought in immense quantities from Cachetia, the best wine growing country in Trans-Caucasia, and known as such to Strabo. A tunga* of red wine in colour resembling claret, costs an abas (sixpence.) Wine of inferior quality is sold ridiculously low, for five or six kopecks the tunga.

* Four bottles.

The wines being conveyed in pig skins, covered inside with naptha tar, have an unpleasant taste, relished by the natives. *Au reste*, this Cachetian wine is pronounced wholesome, and even curative of the gout. The Mingrelian wine, which is only drunk by the rich, is pleasanter, but not so wholesome. The German colonists also prepare a wine, which being stored in cases, is pleasanter to our notion than the Cachetian. The consumption of wine at Tiflis is enormous, amounting yearly to 7,500,000 bottles, which gives one bottle per head daily.

Tiflis is not attractive as a winter residence. Those who do not relish mazurkas, whist with heavy stakes and cunning hands ; and more especially civilians in black coats, who do not display Russian uniforms and decorations, find life tedious there.

Notwithstanding the proverbial hospitality and politeness of the Russian nobility, there is always much restraint in society ; nor can their undeniable gifts of conversation atone for the want of freedom, or blind you to the partiality of their descriptions, which are commonly diametrically opposed to the statements of

foreign travellers, and residents independent of the government. It is proper to add, that the amenities of Tiflis depend greatly on the character of the Governor-general.

CHAPTER III.

Nomadic Life of a Naturalist—Journey from Tiflis to Imeritia—Mzketha, the Ancient Residence of the Kings of Georgia—Gori—The ancient Troglodyte City—Kutais—The Convent of the Catholic Missions in Trans-Caucasia.

MY wanderings have extended over the space of ten years, and embraced sundry regions and climates; but none have left a more vivid or pleasing impression than my nomadic life in the ancient forests of Georgia and Colchis, and my walks over the verdant slopes of the Bythinian Olympus. Very delightful were my strolls in the Alpine regions of the Caucasus, of Aserbeidschan and of Armenia, where I roamed about almost as free as a trapper in the wilds of Canada. Yet I must award the palm to a wandering life in Trans-Caucasia. The stork does not sail more pleasantly through the air,

nor the dolphin play more sportively with the sparkling billows, than I danced and tripped blithesome along the green uplands of the Pambak mountains, in the vast solitudes of the groves of Gambor, in the liana land of Colchis, on the sunny Alpine slopes of Ossetia, roving and bivouacking for weeks far from the haunts of man. At no period was I more bereft of comforts and of society, yet never have I felt freer, more elastic, or happy, than on these adventurous excursions, when we made pilgrimages throughout the land, pitching our tent in the choicest spots, and leading the lives of hunters, explorers, and botanists.

I was accompanied in these expeditions by my old friends, Istvan, the Hungarian, Wassily, the Cossack, and John Saremba, the Pole. I took a horse with me, to convey our baggage, and we were well provided with guns, pistols, and kinschals, of excellent Lesghian steel. Whenever we came to a favoured spot, where the foliage promised good sport, whilst it concealed the smoke of our fire from wandering Tartars, and a crystal stream offered a convenient vicinity, I ordered my people to halt. We unloaded the horse, spread the burkas,

cooking utensils, sugar, rum, tea, &c., on the grass ; my naturalist's curiosities were carefully collected ; a blazing fire was lighted, and our light, and simple fare refreshed our frame, exhilarated by exercise and pure mountain air, in a manner inconceivable, and most enviable to pampered dyspeptics. A delightful glow spread through our systems, whilst nerves and muscles seemed to acquire new energy and life, through the potent influence of the Chinese elixir, which we praised to the skies. After this refreshment, I went in search of farther curiosities, accompanied by the Hungarian and Pole, whilst the old steppe devil, who could never be broken in to collecting, stayed and tended the horse, whom he loved, as a Don veteran, twenty years old, deserved to be loved by his Centaur.

A man must have experienced, individually, the joys and sorrows of the nomadic life of a naturalist to appreciate it justly. Those who have not had a personal knowledge of it, generally imagine its troubles to be greater, and its pleasures less than the reality. A German reader sitting quietly at home, conceives the Trans-Caucasian forests to be peopled with wild beasts

and robbers ; he fancies that the charms of a bivouac under aged plane trees or laurels, and on a bank of aromatic plants, must be neutralized by thoughts of vipers, tarantulas, and scorpions, stealing among the flowers, and ready to attack the unprotected wanderer. And then he reflects that the wolves and bears must regard the daring stranger as a legitimate victim, and sacrifice to the sylvan deities. And even if these perils were imaginary, the fire-side traveller is disgusted at the prospect of a boundless and inextricable wilderness of wood, without the blessings of milestones and sign posts. I admit the existence of all these inconveniences. But close at hand, and through habit, they lose their terrors like most other things in creation, which are magnified and exaggerated by the imagination. The veteran at the out-posts laughs at the bullets singing around him as he eats his ration, and drinks his rum, knowing that a hundred leaden messengers miss where one hits. The same remark applies to the hunter and naturalist, who during his wanderings through brake and glen, becomes familiarized with the perils and accidents of this mode of life, which give it a spice of interest

and tend to ward off *ennui*, the invariable accompaniment of a monotonous style of living.

The encampments that I selected in the Gamborian forests, north west of Tiflis, were commonly situated near brooks, flowing through shady dells, and announcing their presence by their murmuring, bubbling and melodious music, even where their sparkling waters are concealed from view by their overhanging verdure. These rivulets commonly formed the Ariadne thread that led us back from our most distant rambles to our head-quarters again. We generally dispersed in different directions, to collect specimens, and directed our steps to spots favoured by clearances in the wood, by a more genial soil, and copious growth of plants and flowers, where we hoped to gather a rich store of new and rare productions, and of valuable or beautiful insects. If the ardour of research carried us too far from our guiding stream, as we penetrated deeper and deeper in the labyrinth of thicket, with nothing but a canopy of green overhead, through which the deep blue heavens were occasionally visible, we were reduced to use the compass, in order to find our way back, unless the boughs we had

cut off with our kinschal, furnished a clue for our return. Yet, sometimes, in spite of all our precautions, we were unable to recover the track. In such cases, the unhappy vagrant would fire off his rifle at stated intervals, till the report reached his comrades at the encampment, who by responding to the appeal, would guide him home by the sound of the explosions.

It is only the novice who dreads being lost in the woods. The old stager, who is accustomed to roam and go astray through the endless thickets, who has often made his bed on the moss, and to whom the gnarled branches of the primeval oaks have so often answered the purpose of roof or umbrella, is seldom disturbed at the idea of spending weeks alone in the woods, especially if he have a trusty gun and plenty of powder and shot. Nor is even death, itself, so grim a terror in the woods as in the world, to the man who loves the leafy wilderness, like an Indian or a cuckoo. When the mind dwells, as it sometimes must, on the dismal future, nothing reconciles us to it more effectually than a cheerful, tranquil resting place. The forest grave, whilst witnessing the decay of man's noble frame, which cannot subsist without light and

air, is yet the laboratory of new and mighty organisms, providing sap and nourishment for the giants of the grove. And nowhere does this laboratory appear more active or productive than in primeval forests, presenting a glorious crop of diversified vegetation, from the aged oak to the creeping parasite, and the flowery bank fanned by the "sweet south."

Many times have I felt the wish to hop, flutter, and sing through life in the merry woods, as I have stood leaning against the mossy trunk of an oak, and gazing through its labyrinth of branches to the gnarled crown, watching the graceful frolic of the squirrels, the appetite of the 'rapping' wood-pecker, and the nest-building goldfinch chanting its bridal song! Those happy denizens of the woods have no forethought of dismal death, which puzzles our intellect and alarms our imagination. They only feel it when it strikes them, and has lost half its terrors. And how easy is the death of the feathered songster! The moment before, he has, perhaps, opened his beak, and given forth the same anthem as his grandmother, or swallowed more grain than his old stomach could digest. Suddenly, his wing droops; and

leaning with a gently tremulous motion on the mossy bank, his eyes close, and he quietly passes away to eternal rest, without priest, grave-digger or coffin. In the freedom of nature, death generally overtakes its victims with surprising suddenness. Aged larks have been observed to droop and fall dead in the midst of their last flight and carol. These happy songsters are, moreover, granted that natural wish denied to us by the Church and Police, of lying in the deep grass, instead of being hidden in the bowels of the earth.

Our three weeks' residence in the woods gave us excellent opportunities of obtaining pictures of nature. Gladly would I pause and dwell on the sublime and beautiful sights and sounds that I witnessed and enjoyed. I would describe the wondrous meteoric phenomena among the high Ossetian Alps, the ghostly array of misty forms, the terrible majesty of a tempest on Ararat, the glacier scenery of the Kasbek, the sliding scale of vegetation and animal life, from the bearded Gypaetus, sailing in tranquil majesty over the snowy cone of Ararat, and glaring down with piercing eyes as though seeking for the relics of the ark beneath

the ice, to the little tribe of insect life swept hither and thither by the inconstant breezes. Still more charming was the woodland scenery in the bright blush of morn, or by the soft moonlight. After a wholesome meal, we would recline, looking out for game, and watching the symptoms of animal life around us. Our senses were also alive to the world of plants surrounding us, with what has been well styled "*its soul.*" What would not the great seer's eyes of Göthe, or the penetrating research of our most eminent naturalists have detected in the shades and glades of those Colchian groves ! We cannot hope to have equalled those masterly observers and describers. Yet we have done our best, and have collected much useful information respecting natural science in Trans-Caucasia. I was sometimes so engrossed in my contemplations whilst seated on a mossy divan in the groves of the Pambak mountain, that many a deer has owed its life to my abstraction, as she came crashing through the break, and shot by ere I could level my fowling piece.

Our last excursion in Georgia led us to the woody range of Priutin, where the Governor-

general had a country residence, forming a welcome retreat from the ceremonious life of Tiflis. As the autumn was at hand with its cool nights, and a settler's hut, inhabited by a discharged Russian soldier and his family, offered a convenient shelter, we gave up our bivouacking life at this place ; and, after making some additions to my collections, we returned to the capital, and soon after left it for Mingrelia, whither I forwarded my luggage by caravan, escorted by the Hungarian, whilst I made a *détour* to Kutais by Mzketha and Gori.

Dubois, whose descriptions are always correct when he avoids politics, is quite accurate when he affirms that Mzketha, the ancient royal capital of Georgia, 'which was, for ages, so famous, wealthy, and powerful,' is now a miserable, ruinous place. The old Georgian cathedral, Sveti-Tzkhoveli, still soars above the surrounding remains of this residence, and is held to be the most ancient church in Georgia. Its foundation is ascribed to King Mirian, who was converted to Christianity in the year 276. The original edifice was of wood, which was replaced by a handsome stone structure, erected by King Mirdad, in 364. The Georgian

chronicles relate that not one stone was left standing in the metropolitan church of Mzketha, after the terrible Tartar invasion under Timur, King Alexander rebuilt it subsequently on a different plan, but in the year 1656, the cupola fell in, probably in consequence of an earthquake, but it was restored two years after, by the Moslem King Roston. King Wakhtang V., who lived at the beginning of the eighteenth century, embellished the metropolitan church, which is certainly one of the most remarkable Christian temples south of the Caucasus. It is in the form of a cross, with a conical dome rising over the centre of the nave. Its elevation is 111, its length 178, its width 78 feet. The walls of the interior of the church are adorned with frescoes, having Greek and Georgian inscriptions over them. Most of the Georgian Kings and Patriarchs lie buried in the vaults underneath this church.

In 1804, the cathedral is said to have been surrounded by only thirty miserable hovels, but if the statement be correct, the population must have increased since that period, as the number of inhabited cottages mentioned in the statistical work of M. Ewetzki, amounts to

124. The town itself does not appear to have been at any time extensive, but it had suburbs beyond Mount Sarkhinethi, and on the banks of both rivers, whose confluence is at this place. To the northward, the suburb of Samthavro adjoining the royal residence, comprised a handsome church, resembling the cathedral in architecture and decorations, and whose foundation was attributed to King Mirdat, in the latter half of the 4th century. Some antiquaries have regarded it as even more ancient than the cathedral. Many ruins are still visible on the left bank of the Aragui, and they appear also to have belonged to the ancient city. The summit of the mountain which affords a magnificent prospect over the valleys of the Kur and the Aragui, is crowned by another ancient and half ruinous church, in which Divine service was celebrated at the beginning of the present century. The name of this church was Stepan-Tzminda. A traveller who visited and described it at the commencement of the present century, was surprised to find, contrary to the Greek custom, a great altar in its centre, in whose niche, St. John was painted, with the Greek inscription, 'O Theologos.' No

other inscriptions were detected at that time by Herr Steven, the only traveller who has visited the church.

My diary does not notice anything particular on the road from Mzketha to Gori. The latter town stands on the left bank of the Kur, in a cheerful and healthy situation, and its houses built of boulders, rise on the declivity of the hill in the form of an ampitheatre. The rocks above the town are crowned by the ancient fortress, which is no longer used, and whose builder is unknown. An ancient church in the town has been converted into a powder magazine.

In the immediate vicinity of Gori, the two large streams, the Lakwa and the Matschuda, flow into the Kur. It has been sometimes regretted that after the Russian occupation, Gori was not selected as the capital, instead of Tiflis, over which it has many advantages; Gori being half a day nearer to the Euxine, and to the glorious district of Imeritia. Nevertheless, the country immediately surrounding Gori is not so picturesque, though it is more fertile and healthy than the vicinity of Tiflis. The population of Gori consists of only 3400 souls, of whom

the majority are Armenians. The Roman Catholic as well as the Georgian Armenians have many adherents here.

During my stay at Gori, some Italian Capuchins were still residing there, though a few months later they shared the fate of their spiritual colleagues at Tiflis and Kutais, being violently removed under an escort of Cossacks. These monks exerted a considerable influence on the Catholic population, not only through their piety and the peculiar cordiality with which Italian Capuchins treat the lower orders, but more especially by the charity which they distributed on the most liberal scale, owing to the munificence of the Propaganda, and of the French Missionary Association. I am not aware that they ever used this religious influence for political purposes, or that they abused it in any way. Nor has the Russian Government judged it expedient to justify or apologize for the disgraceful severity which it employed against these foreign priests, to whose persons and presence the Catholic population had become accustomed for many years. Besides the erection of the Catholic Church, the population of Gori were indebted to these monks for

the establishment of a hospital, and of a school, in which the children were taught a little Italian, as well as their native tongue.

This town, which, in all probability, never attained a very high degree of prosperity, began to decay a long time before the Russian conquest; and though Gori has not profited much by the Muscovite occupation, it is indebted to it for the security of the vicinity. In times past, the Lesghians made continual forays into the surrounding country, and even ventured sometimes, into the town to pillage. They were especially addicted to steal women and children, whom they sold to the Turkish slave traders.

I devoted the brief period of my stay at Gori, to visit the neighbouring troglodyte city of Uplotichos, which has received its appellation from a Georgian village situated at the foot of the rocks, which contain a greater number of well preserved antiquities, than any ruinous city in Egypt or in Greece.

The remains of this Colchian town are so peculiar, that even the traveller who has viewed, with wonder, the ruins of Rome, Thebes, Heliopolis, and Palmyra, finds still much to excite

his admiration. There is no doubt that analogous remains are to be found near Lake Van, dating as far back as the reign of Semiramis. The Crimea, also, furnishes a similar excavated city, on Mount Tepeberman ; but its architecture, or rather, handywork, cannot bear comparison with the city on the Kur, as regards beauty of design and execution. As it is our purpose to avoid the repetition of descriptions, we shall abstain from entering into details, referring the reader to the minute account of the city given by Dubois.

This ancient excavated town stands on the summit of a sandstone rock, and is reached by a well-made road cut through the strata. Many of the excavations present no remarkable features, and were probably tenanted by the lower orders. In the handsomer caverns, which belonged to the wealthier classes, you cannot detect a vestige of hammers, or the pick, the walls being as clean and smooth as in the excavations at Van. Many of the excavations present vaulted roofs, like churches or chapels ; and the sides consist of elegant pillars cut out of the rock. Unfortunately, only one inscription remains, which Dubois affirms to be half Ar-

menian, and half Arabic ; a singular circumstance, that requires explanation. The decorations of the walls and ceilings in some of these chambers are very beautiful ; nor can it be reasonably doubted, that the people which made these excavations must have possessed a certain amount of cultivation. Dubois fancied that he detected the influence of the ancient Persian style in these ruins, and imagined that the founder of the city was Uplos, the son of King Mzkethos, at a time when the Georgians were still worshippers of the sun and stars. On the highest summit of the mountain, stands a church, the only building that has not been excavated, and probably of a much more recent date than the city. The Georgian chronicles throw no light on the annals of this mysterious city. The existing population of the village situated at the foot of the rock, consists principally of Armenians, the Georgian families being few in number.

After a short stay at Uplotichos and Gori, we pursued our journey to Suram. The country is monotonous. The road leads through the valley of the Kur, which was filled with inland lakes, before the river had found a regular

channel by breaking through the porphyritic rocks which bound the basin of Tiflis to the west. We did not enter the woody region till we reached Suram. The mountains covered with thickets, consist principally of limestone, and the forests are composed of beech, oaks, ash, elm, aspen, and the usual timber of Germany. Birch is entirely wanting, there is only a sprinkling of firs, and the larger timber disappeared as we approached Kutais. Wild pigeons occurred in such immense flights in this district, that even a random shot was certain to bring down one or two of them.

Kutais, (the ancient Kutatissium,) is delightfully situated on the left bank of the Phasis, in a green valley encompassed by woody mountains, of considerable elevation. This classical stream, issuing from the neighbouring uplands, rushes past the town with rapid and noisy current, raging and roaring among the porphyritic rocks, and rolling along heavy boulders in its bed. The modern part of the town, which has been built chiefly since the Russian occupation has an inviting and cheerful appearance, with its wide streets, and elegant white houses, half concealed by the foliage. The upper

part of the town, consisting of the ancient fortified Uchimerion, contains some remarkable ruins, including the remains of the Acropolis, which was partially destroyed by Russian vandalism, in 1769. The Muscovite, General Todleben, who had marched at that period to the assistance of King Solomon, of Imeritia, supporting him with Russian bayonets, against the insurrection of his subjects, was opposed by the Turks, whom the Imeritians, had called to their aid. Todleben advancing from Ossetia, planted his cannon on the heights, and thundered against the Uchimerion. When the Turks discovered that the walls of the old fortress gave them no protection against the Russian guns, they evacuated Kutais and Imeritia, leaving their protégés in the lurch. To prevent their return, Todleben proposed to Solomon, to blow up the fort, and the weak, dependant Prince, did not dare to oppose the proposition of the Russian. Accordingly, the ancient castle was destroyed, and most of the antiquities of Kutais with it. But the huge, shattered fragments that lie scattered around, and the remains of a church, give a fair notion of the ancient Georgian architecture. At the highest spot of

the ruined citadel commanding a magnificent view of the surrounding country, stand the ruins of a palace of the ancient Lasian Kings, and the citadel itself is surrounded by numerous ruins of gates, aqueducts and cisterns. Finally, in the centre of the upper town, the eye is greeted with a view of the old Cathedral, a fine building, with numerous sculptures, whose melancholy dilapidated and ivy grown walls, inclose a tranquil and charming Imeritian and Russian cemetery.

After an interval of cloudy days, the sky had recovered its serenity, and I hailed with delight the return of fine weather, as I wandered by moonlight, among the ruins and graves, with a bearded Imeritian priest by my side. If we had been disposed to indulge in a contemplative mood amidst these scenes of decay and dissolution, our meditations would have been effectually interrupted by the Russian drum-major, who, to do proper honour to the Emperor's Coronation day, roused the echoes of the rocks and ruins, by the crash of merry waltzes, mazurkas and operas ascending from the banks of the Phasis, through the still evening air.

It is generally known, that the Imeritians are connected in type and tongue with the Georgians. Yet my German dragoman, who was familiar with the Tiflis dialect, found it difficult to make himself understood at Kutais. The remaining inhabitants of the latter town, are Armenians, Jews and Russians. There are also small colonies of Turkish, Greek and Lasian artizans at Kutais, and besides the above enumerated specimens of human varieties, you occasionally detect among the purchasers in the bazaars, some of the wild sons of the mountains, especially Ossetians and Suanetians, in their well known costume, who come down to sell horse cloths, burkas, fox, martin and bear skins, wax and honey.

The celebration of the Coronation day, had attracted a crowd of these various nationalities in the great square of Kutais, whither they flocked to witness the illumination, to listen to the military band, and to see the Imeritian youth play at ball. The Imeritian costume is almost identical with the Georgian, save that instead of the high lamb-skin caps of the latter, they wear a square piece of brown cloth neatly

edged and fastened under the chin with a black string.

The predominant character of the Georgian type may be detected in the Imeritian population, but it has a nobler and more expressive development in the case of the latter. The beauty of the men and women of Imeritia is universally known and celebrated. Their singularly symmetrical, noble, and delicate forms, are perfect models of physical beauty, and would seem to have floated before the imagination, or memory of Grecian sculptors, when they wrought Antinous and Apollo.

Nor can many races rival the inhabitants of Imeritia, Mingrelia, Guria, and Adschara (formerly Colchis) in harmony of features. Even the haughty hero forms of the Circassians must yield to them. The traveller encounters occasionally in the most secluded woods of this region, women clad in many coloured rags, and inhabiting the most wretched hovels, whose lovely features and forms, converted into marble, would be worthy of a place beside the Venus of Canova in the Vatican.

As a special feature of the district near Kutais, I cannot avoid noticing the Russian

eunuch colony at Marran. There is in Russia a sect of seceders, called Astarewerzi, *i. e.*, Old Believers, whose adherents have misconstrued the sense of a passage of Scripture, and Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Riga, are inhabited by a considerable number of these singular fanatics, who think to gain an entrance into heaven by self-mutilation. The Russian Government has attempted, with its usual severity, to suppress this fanatical sect, but it has not been so successful in their case as with political exaltados. Many of these eunuchs were forced to serve in the army, as a punishment ; others were transported to Trans-Caucasia, where they form military colonies at Marran and Nassaran, twenty versts from Vladikaukas. I saw several of these people, and was informed by a German physician, that they fall more speedy victims to endemic diseases, than the other inhabitants.

They are discovered at a glance among the other inhabitants, by their sallow, earthy complexion, their emaciation, and the revoltingly effeminate expression of their beardless faces. Nor can a more terrible contrast be conceived than that between the disgusting features of these Russian fanatics, and the glorious men of Imeritia, who

must occasionally fret in secret at the thought of having lost their freedom, and national independence, to a people physically and mentally so inferior to them as their conquerors.

I took up my quarters at Kutais, in a small inn, kept by a conceited fellow, who wished to pass for a Polish noble, but I put up with his pretensions, in consideration of the shelter. Travelling in Asia is always more convenient in the Russian than in Mohammedan districts, where you must commonly dispense with roads and all accommodation, whilst in Persia and Koordistan, you are devoured with vermin.

The Italian Capuchins of Kutais made a more agreeable impression on me than they did on Dubois de Montpereux. This may have resulted from the absence of the convent Doctor Campocastro, whom Dubois styles, "Le plus ignore, le plus gredin des charlatans, qui se disent, médecins," or from the presence of Abbé Vidal, and some French officers fresh from Persia, or finally, the letter I brought from Pater Benedetto, at Tiflis, may have worked wonders. At all events, Pater Don Antonio was all civility.

The convent is charmingly situated on the Phasis, and surrounded by umbrageous groves. The waters of the classical stream made pleasant music, as they dashed and danced below our windows, and added to the zest of the good father's entertainment, and the fiery Imeritian wine. The convent of Kutais is generally occupied by only two friars, but a third, Pater Benedetto, happened to be present at this time. The latter, after having experienced many contrarieties at Tiflis, had retired to Kutais, where he was preparing to return to his home in Sicily, when our arrival gave him a welcome opportunity of travelling to Constantinople under our escort. The Superior of the convent was an Italian, and the other friar was a native of Kutais, and a pupil of the Propaganda ; but although he greatly surpassed his colleague in scientific instruction, which he had acquired at Rome, yet the Italian had obtained more respect and esteem in the town and country, by his good-humour, which he had in common with most Italian Capuchins. I frequently witnessed the child-like veneration in which he was held by the Armenian boys, to whom he dis-

tributed a few copper pieces when they acquitted themselves satisfactorily at school.

On the other hand, Don Antonio was more spiritual and erudite, and favoured by a refined exterior, having the distinguished physiognomy of his compatriots, with their delicately chiselled aquiline nose, and a splendid, raven black beard. This well educated propagandist showed me, with an honest pride, his tolerably copious library, consisting principally of Italian and Armenian books, besides a few French works, including Massillon, Bossuet, &c. Unfortunately, these monks had been latterly deprived of the privilege of obtaining books from Italy.

A handsome present of books had recently arrived in the country, from Rome, destined for the convent, and containing only theological and perfectly unobjectionable works. But the Russian *douaniers* refused to let the books pass, under various pretexts, whilst they secretly intimated to the fathers, that the books were at their disposal, if they paid a silver rouble (3*s.*) per volume. As the means of the convent were not adequate to meet this bribe, the books

remained in the hands of the Russian Custom-house officers.

Eight hundred Catholics, chiefly Armenians, live at or near Kutais, speaking nothing but the Imeritian tongue; whilst a few genuine Imeritians are reckoned among the Catholic population. Their conversion to Catholicism took place at the same time that such a multitude of Armenian, Greek, and Nestorian Christians passed into the Latin Church, in Turkey and Persia. At the present time, the Catholic priests in Trans-Caucasia are strictly forbidden to make any proselytes. One of the Capuchins informed me, that if they were allowed free scope, they could convert many hundreds of the Pagan and Mohammedan mountaineers. He added, that multitudes of Suanetians and Abchasiens, most of whom were genuine heathens, had announced their wish to receive baptism, in the convent of Kutais, but they were ordered away; for every priest who attempts to convert an idolator into a Roman Catholic, is threatened with transportation to Siberia. There might be an appearance of reason, if not of justice, if this prohibition to

enter the Catholic and Protestant churches were limited to members of the Russo-Greek faith, or to the Christian confessions generally. But to forbid even Mohammedans, Jews and Pagans, to seek their salvation in any other, save the orthodox Russian church, is a specimen of oppression and compulsion that has never been devised by any Potentate before, as far as I know. The unavoidable conclusion drawn from this prohibition, emanating from a Christian state in the nineteenth century, is, that it prefers Jewish and Heathen to Catholic subjects.

I saw amongst the pupils at the convent, a young Armenian, who showed considerable natural abilities, and who was destined to receive his finishing education as missionary, in the school of the Propaganda at Rome. He was attached with enthusiastic ardour to his calling; but the Government refused to allow him to travel to the Eternal City. The severity and persecution which prevailed at Colchis, even at the time of my visit, showed clearly that the Catholic missions would soon experience the fate of the Protestant missionaries from Bâle,

who, after enduring many vexations, were finally driven out of Georgia and Russia, by Baron Rosen.

The good fathers showed me every part of the convent, and let me attend the noisy school, where thirty or forty boys were shouting or singing all together. They could read and write Georgian, and they read Italian with tolerable facility. The remainder of their lessons consisted in learning prayers by heart ; nor did the friars spare little *douceurs* in money to stimulate the industry of their pupils. A handsome and spacious church was being erected close to the convent, at the cost of 7000 roubles, paid by the Propaganda of Rome. A large and well-designed altar-piece had arrived from the Eternal City, and was shown to me with much satisfaction by Don Antonio. Many Mohammedans were engaged in erecting the edifice ; but they did not scruple to assist in the erection of a Christian temple ; whilst another sect of Christians placed all kinds of impediments in the way of the work. Meanwhile, the time of our departure drew nigh, and Pater Benedetto had tied up his bundle. We paid a last

visit to the hospitable refectory, tasted the excellent convent cake for the last time, and drank the parting toast "To better times," in the ruby Imeritian wine.

CHAPTER IV.

The Life of a Naturalist—An Episode.

FALLERMAYER has written, that “The ever-green glades and groves of Colchis appear to realize ‘Paradise Lost,’ the land of waking dreams in early youth, whose balmy breezes I was destined to breathe.”

When I read this passage in the Colchian fragments of the Professor, I was reminded of another man who loved the sunny banks of the Phasis as dearly, but to whom fate was less propitious, than to the academician of the Isar. I allude to a young Russian naturalist, who was not fortunate enough to return from his pilgrimage to his domestic hearth, like Fallermayer, who had the satisfaction to print his diary, and to relate his adventures in Colchis, whilst

smoking his cigar, and sipping his famous Bavarian beer in a Munich restaurant.

I admit that life is at best a chequered scene. Joys and sorrows, prize essays and biting criticisms, Turkish nischan and Bavarian beer form a strange but certain succession. If every wanderer had found a poetical grave amidst the shades of Colchis, he would have escaped the infliction of bad portraits, and the charges of flattery, meanness, or stupidity.

Szowitsch, our hero, was a Slavic naturalist, who led a roving life amidst the primeval woods of Imeritia, and described his experiences in letters to a Crimean friend, who showed them to me. I read them with sympathy and pleasure, and was surprised to find the similarity in sentiment and expression between Szowitsch and Fallermayer, the son of the Alps, and the child of the steppe.

The last letter of Szowitsch dated Kutais, was written shortly before his death. "I am impressed with feelings," thus he writes, "which have long been strangers to my breast. The people here think that I look dreamy and melancholy, and they often ask me what afflicts me. Yet my heart beats as light as in child-

hood, and I could sing all day. I wish you could see the hut I have built in the woods: box and laurel, form its walls and roof, flowers and wild plants its floor. A blue-throated warbler and a starling share it with me, and I shall set them free when I leave, out of gratitude for their carols, with which they wake me in the morning. Then I throw on my burka, and run out to see the glorious dawn. It is a sublime moment, and a great compensation for much suffering; around and above me an ocean of deep verdure, in one place fabulous ruins of unknown origin; at my feet the sparkling Rion, with its azure zone belting the forest. The sun arises over the forest world, and I and my birds salute it, I with silent admiration, and my songsters with their anthems. My thoughts take no definite shape, but I hope that God will accept them as a prayer. Then I jump up from my morning dream, take my gun and botanical case, and rush into the thicket! how happy I am there. I love the woods and the chace, and like the Indian I cannot fancy a happy home, without hunting grounds. You in your dismal steppe cannot conceive the glories of these old woods of Colchis, you have

no idea of these mighty trees with their creepers, of this ground with its carpet of flowers, of the twittering birds on every branch. I seldom come back without a rich harvest, which I send to Kutais, where I dine with the Capuchins, who are friendly, hospitable people. But I return ere twilight to my hut, view the sunset, and rejoice that the morning will soon return. How the mountains glow! how sweetly the evening bells from the convent swell on the night air. How solemn sound the waters of the Rion, through the forest, whilst my neighbour the cuckoo wishes me good night with melancholy tone. Good night my friend, I cannot tell you how happy I am here, and I am sadly pained to think that I must ever leave it!"

And poor Szowitsch did leave it. But his mortal part remained behind in the Colchian woods. A few weeks after the date of this letter, he was no more. The exhilaration he speaks of, was the commencement of a fever that carried him off after some exhausting expeditions among the hills and woods of glorious Guria, and his mortal remains repose beside the Rion, the rush of whose waters used to gladden him at night.

When I was conducted, a few years ago, to the spot, I found the hut fallen in, and the birds escaped to the woods, where they now warble over the grave of poor Szowitsch.

This young naturalist was one of those wonderful men who cannot be happy in the monotony of home life, and are driven abroad by an irresistible impulse. After roaming through the Caucasus, Cachetia, Georgia, Armenia and Western Persia, he lingered a while at the German colony of Katharinengfeld, detained by the blue eyes and charms of a Suabian maid, who caused him to forget his zoology and botany for a season. But a stout and comely lad, Tobias Haubensack, found greater favour than the poor naturalist, in the sight of Klärchen, and when the Suabian yeoman appeared one day in his best buckskin breeches, new hose and bridegroom's coat, with huge buttons, Szowitsch saw that the case was hopeless, as the round and ruddy face of the German belle beamed brighter on viewing the irresistible attractions of the favoured swain, who pressed her in his stalwart arms, exclaiming, "Klärchen—this is thy own Haubensack!" To cure his spleen,

the naturalist took up his staff again, and succeeded, at length, in finding comfort amidst the groves of Colchis.

A few years later, I came to Imeritia, and as I was one day wandering along the Phasis, near Kutais, thinking of Jason and the Golden Fleece, and admiring the blue waters, and the verdant foliage, I found the willow, underneath which poor Szowitsch slumbers.

CHAPTER V.

French Travellers from Persia—Journey through Imeritia and Mingrelia—Natural Scenery—Beauty of the Colchian Landscapes—Soil on the Phasis—Mingrelian Family Life—Aged Forests of Colchis.

OUR party had been joined at Kutais by some French travellers, who wished to accompany us on our return to Europe. They were officers coming from Teheran, discharged military instructors, lately in the service of the Shah, besides Abbé Vidal, a witty, clever man, who had made the unsuccessful attempt to teach that prince the French language. All three were amiable and cheerful companions, genuine Frenchmen, always gay, contented and chatty, full of witty sallies, never depressed by obstacles,

and never tormented with German spleen and ill-humour. There were, moreover, two French ladies, whereof one was married, young and amiable, whilst the other was single, old and querulous. The latter was also accompanied by a parrot, a black pug and three greyhounds, from Persia, an heirloom from her sister, the late Countess of Damas, at Teheran, and which, she would not suffer to be strangled, either from affection or wilfulness, although their transport gave not a little trouble. The aged Mamselle had obtained a great knowledge of life during her travels, and the many years that she had witnessed, but, unfortunately, she saw the night side of everything, and the same remark might be applied to her as to Madam Pieper: her mouth was a guillotine for every fair fame from Paris to Teheran.

It was not admissible that such a party should start from Kutais without a scene. The Polish host was addicted to double charges, and he had, moreover, such a surly *naturel*, that Dickens might have said of him that "a porcupine would be a feather-bed by his side." Of his German-Polish wife, my Diary only re-

marks, that her person seemed to have a strong antipathy to soap and water, and that she could never have passed an examination in politeness. This amiable pair made our departure from Kutais a scene of strife and confusion. Expressions were bandied about, on both sides, that did not savour of the essence of roses of Teheran, and the interference of the Pater Benedetto, of Catania, alone prevented an application of fistycuffs. This worthy Capuchin had joined our party, now amounting to seven, and acted suitably to his cloth, as peacemaker on the present occasion.

Over the bridge of Kutais we went in single file, at a solemn pace, forming a somewhat picturesque caravan. In front rode the son of Jean Paul, a veteran of la Grande Armée, captured in 1812, and settled in the colony of New Tiflis. The youth acted the part of guide, and was followed by the French officers, the Abbé, and myself, whilst the aged and youthful ladies, poodle, parrot, and greyhounds, came next, and the main body was closed by fourteen pack-horses, with their drivers, in the picturesque Imeritian costume. The rear-guard consisted of the Capuchin, with his rosary over

his white dress, and a great wooden missionary cross on his breast, intended to secure us against accidents and mishaps. Pater Benedetto was a good-humoured, jovial man, a general favourite with us all, always of a sociable mood, and ready for humorous converse. Nor did he resent it, if we bantered him sometimes. He seemed far from distressed at the idea of returning to his convent, and spoke occasionally with patriotic enthusiasm of the beauties of his home, of the pure air of Catania, of its pious citizens, and delicious maccaroni, which the unhappy man had not tasted for years.

The country through which we passed, to the west of Kutais, is surprisingly beautiful, resembling a vast English park, with meadows, rushing streams, mighty groups of timber-trees, heavy with leafy honours and fruit ; it is a fairy garden, like the Park of Titania, embellished by the gorgeous vegetation, sunshine, and azure skies of Colchis. The character of Imeritian landscape is gay, lovely, and simple, without monotony. The eye is never wearied with looking at these fresh, verdant, and variegated glades, carpeted with flowers and plants, or of gazing up at the light green shrubberies of the

hazel and ash-trees, of the willows and silver poplars, of the pear, cherry, apple, and apricot-trees ; whilst, at other times, your path carries you past the primeval giants of the forest. These aged woods consist of beech, lime, oak, and elm, ash and walnut-trees alternating in endless succession with planes and silver poplars, and though the timber-trees may not exceed in size those of our German forests, they are much more luxuriantly decorated with creepers. But trees of more southern climes thrive amongst the former, including the evergreen box, the fig-tree, the laurel, the chestnut, and the arbutus tree, with a fiery red bark, and all these are overgrown and almost concealed by a prodigious underwood of dwarf palms, rose-laurels, myrtle, and rhododendrons. Yet the vine presents the most graceful ornament of these Colchian groves. This is its original cradle ; it was here that it yielded its purple grape and fiery wine to the earliest races, and hence it spread into all lands of Europe and Asia, to strengthen and rejoice the heart of man. The Colchian vine presents a splendour, luxury, and size, exceeding the conceptions of Europeans.

It is an additional charm of the Imeritian

landscapes, that the whole scenery is not engrossed by the majestic forest, which would necessarily create a certain monotony. In Imeritia, the woods have many sunny breaks and clearances, occupied by meadows and fields of maize. Yet these clearances are of limited dimensions, and adorned by groups of trees, lifting a dome of vine and ivy creepers to their highest branches. Not a rock, stone, or naked piece of ground can be discovered near the lower course of the Phasis. Every spot that is not occupied by perennial plants, presents one tangled growth of grasses, flowers, annuals, and every variety of creeper. Higher up, among the trees, the eye is soothed by the numerous shades of green, from the sombre verdure of the fir, tamarisk, and cypress, to the lustrous foliage of the laurel, and to the silver green of the Colchian poplar, whilst the purple clusters of the grapes peep out beneath every branch.

“ Why, this is like Paradise !” exclaimed my companions in one breath, at the sight of such glorious profusion. Nor is the comparison unnatural, so admirably does this region correspond to the Eden of Genesis, where we read : “ That the Lord God caused all kind of trees to grow

in the earth, pleasant to look at, and good to eat." Many travellers in the Old and New Worlds have compared their scenery to Paradise, and some have gone farther. Thus, Tournefort describes the arid plain of Etch-miadsin in Armenia, Joseph Wolff the treeless and marshy vale of the Euphrates in Mesopotamia, and Daniel Schlatter, the scorched south coast of the Crimea, as resembling the Garden of Eden. But, on viewing nature in Colchis, the dullest observer is reminded of the picture of Paradise in the Mosaic tradition. Though I have seen many enchanting spots during ten years of travel, I do not recollect any scenery to compare with the banks of the Phasis, in tranquil beauty, splendour of vegetation, and the harmonious distribution of hills, woods, and streams. Even the Anatolian Olympus, the abode of the Gods, with its emerald uplands, its crown of foliage, and its musical streams, does not equal Colchis, nor can the Hesperian gardens of Blidah, with their orange forests, or even Italy, with its Lake of Como, Genoese Riviera, and Bay of Naples, enter the lists with this part of Trans-Caucasia. Guria, Mingrelia, and the western part of

Imeritia, are the most beautiful portions of ancient Colchis, and much more glorious than the district of Trebizonde, which I visited subsequently. The basin of the Phasis between Poti and Marran, may be regarded as the focus of attraction.

We experienced on the evening of September the 7th, at Marran, the luxury of repose, after riding hard all day, and feasting our eyes on so many beauties, till they were quite exhausted. The remark applied especially to Pater Benedetto, who, after being half-flayed by his ride, threw himself in transports on a downy Circassian burka. Three fourths of our party were already settled in, whilst the water bubbled cheerfully in our tea-kettle. Too excited to sleep, and leaning against a tree, I enjoyed the scene, lighted up by our camp-fire.

The French officers dressed, half in Parisian, and half in Persian fashion, looked rather like comedians. The energetic Abbé Vidal in his hunting dress, resembled much more a *vieux de la vieille garde* than a priest, for he had a substantial moustache, and decided, martial features. The young French lady looked pale, suffering, and interesting, and retained, even in

her slumber, the graces of a Parisienne. The aged Mamselle lay upon a burka, surrounded by the pug, the parrot, and the greyhounds. It could never enter the most extravagant imagination, that she had barricaded herself by these means to protect her virtue, for she possessed more effectual and vigilant defenders in her ugly features. Our Imeritian guides and drivers, handsome men with placid countenances, were lying by the luggage, under the neighbouring trees, and they slept as sweetly and looked as contented as the remainder of the party, though they had made all the journey on foot, and had fared on nothing better than pea-gruel. "In sleep," says Cervantes, "all men, the great and the little, rich and poor, are equal."

The following day we pursued our journey, descending the river, from Marran in flat-bottomed boats. From this place to its mouth, the Phasis flows in a fine broad and deep channel, without islands, and unobstructed with rapids. Between Kutais and Marran, where you enter Mingrelia, the character of the river undergoes a complete change. At Kutais, the current is rapid and noisy, foaming and roaring

between its rocky banks, as it rolls mighty boulders in its channel. But below Marran, the Phasis is a languid, gentle stream, and after a short and impetuous youth, it moves on in steady majesty, like a noble old man. Scarcely can you trace a ripple in the water, so trifling is the fall; nor do boats find any difficulty in breasting the stream. The rocks on either bank now disappear, and are replaced by gentle slopes covered with forest and thickets. Nor is it an easy matter to effect a landing everywhere, for the damp soil on the banks yields under the pressure of the foot, and the net-work of exuberant vegetation presents another almost insuperable barrier. The Phasis would be admirably adapted for steam navigation from Poti to the borders of Imeritia, the fall being very trifling, and the bed of the river free from shallows and reefs. Below Marran, the current is so insignificant, that it cannot move even the smallest boulders.

Of all ancient writers, Arrian gives the fullest, but a very erroneous account of the Phasis. He maintains, that though the water is sweet on the surface, it is salt underneath, and that it can be kept pure for ten years. All this sounds

fabulous. We drew up water from some depth, and found it quite sweet, at Kutaïs, but below Marran, it is quite impregnated with vegetable mould, and unfit for drinking. Arrian states that a stone anchor existed at that time, at the mouth of the Phasis, and was attributed to the Argo. Æschylus mentions this river, in his Prometheus, and calls it the boundary of Europe and Asia.

Our boats dropped gently down the current amidst landscapes of an American character, resembling the scenes described by Châteaubriand, on the Mississippi and Ohio. The only feature wanting, was the exuberance of animal life in the woods and prairies of the New World. Mingrelia is the only region of the Old World that reminded me of the landscapes of America. Though the forests of the Caucasus are very old, they are wanting in the luxury, exuberance, and underwood of the forest scenery of the Far West. But the vegetation on the lower Phasis, does not fall short of the vigorous and virgin beauty of the woods on the Mississippi and Amazon. Nor do the American streams equal the rivers of Western Asia in historical interest.

Whereas the waters of the Far West have

only witnessed Red-skin tragedies and buffalo hunts, the magic and mysterious coasts of Colchis have been visited by Grecian heroes, its woods have re-echoed the harp of Orpheus, and critics have thought to trace the wanderings of Ulysses in the *Odyssey* along the Euxine shores. One thing is certain, *i. e.*, that the banks of the Rion were the seat of very ancient culture, of which all traces have now vanished. Musing on these great memories, we floated silently down the current, the very Frenchmen being, for once, checked in their colloquial propensities by the *genius loci*. Nor were our thoughts engrossed by recollections of the past, for we could not help comparing Colchis with our country, and anticipating its future.

Two thousand five hundred years ago, a mysterious civilization hovered over the Phasis. Strabo relates, that in his day, more than a hundred and forty bridges spanned its current. Rich, mighty, and comely nations dwelt on its banks, but tradition is silent as to their fate. An industrious and commercial city then stood at the mouth of the Phasis, whilst the banks of the Rhine were a wilderness of bog and forest, through which our blue-eyed, flaxen-

headed sires roamed almost as wild as the red men of the West. Now, both streams have changed character. The bridges, colonies, and culture of the Phasis, have disappeared, whilst the banks of the Rhine are adorned with stately cities, and on its waters float the riches of a cultivated and philosophic people, the descendants of blond, bearish savages. What will appear on the Phasis and the Rhine, two thousand years hence ?

Towards evening, we landed on the left bank of the Rion. Our boatmen cleared a way for us through the thicket; and we found in the wood some Mingrelian huts, whose poor inmates had nothing to offer but gruel, grapes, nuts, and wine. The Mingrelians who live scattered in these woods, are very handsome people, but have pale complexions. They suffer from the same malignant fevers which sweep away the Russian soldiers by hundreds. Their disposition appears gentle, peaceable, harmless, and idle; but they are reckoned honourable and loyal—a rare quality in Asia. The population is thinly scattered, and not inclined to congregate together. The time must also come when the natives on the Phasis will disappear, and

make way for Sclavic settlers ; and when the Mingrelian race and tongue will be only matters of history. Nor can they escape the fate of some Indian tribes of the Mississippi, of whom a traveller relates, that only one individual survived to speak their tongue—an aged parrot, fluttering about the woods, and uttering at times strange human-like tones. On the Phasis, the cuckoo takes the place of the parrot, and will always find it as difficult as the Russian soldier to learn Mingrelian.

It is no easy matter to make excursions among the ancient woods of Colchis. The tangled thickets are often almost impenetrable, even to birds ; and we found the Circassian kinschal very useful, in cutting our way through the brushwood. After making a meagre collection of plants and insects, we began to press and preserve them, much to the amusement of the Capuchin. He begged for an explanation of the mystery ; and when informed that it was the chief object of my travels, he raised his hands above his head, and broke out into a peal of laughter. The good pater reminded me of the corpulent Arragonese missionary, whom Humboldt met at San Francisco, in

South America, who received him and Bonpland very hospitably, but could not conceive how a man with plenty of beef, and a respectable income at home, could prefer to wander over the wilderness in distant hemispheres, in order to pick a few plants, and find the degree of heat in running streams.

When dawn appeared, I roamed into the woods, leaving my friends asleep ; and on my return, after a somewhat lengthy stroll, I was amused to find the party still locked in the embrace of Morpheus. Yet the Colchian Aurora glanced through the branches of the hazel trees, and played with her rosy fingers over the nose of the old French lady, without rousing her. Pater Benedetto lay still extended, with fast closed eyelids, whilst his peach-coloured cheeks were swelled out, as if in the act of blowing an angelic trump, and his expression was that of beatitude. But our Imeritian boatmen became impatient at the delay. Meanwhile the party awoke, and were agitated with a longing for coffee. But no milk was forthcoming ; and the old French lady broke forth into bitter lamentations, when she discovered that the impatience of the Imeritian boatmen

was the only impediment in the way of our obtaining some. She poured forth a torrent of reproaches on their heads, and shook her clenched hand at them in such a threatening manner, that although they did not understand a word she said, they shrunk back quite alarmed and brow-beaten. Not knowing the idiom of the country, we could not discover what the Imeritians thought of the old lady, whose attire was a medley of the Amazonic, French, and Oriental costume. All that our dragoman could detect from their observations, was, that they thought the French officers to have been in the East Indian service ; whilst they had strong suspicions of the aged Mamselle having been fencing-master of the Great Mogul.

There is an old channel uniting the Phasis and the Chopi, which flows into the sea at Redut-Kaleh. It bears the name of the Tsiwa Canal, and it is uncertain if it is a work of art or nature. When our boats approached this canal, the landscape on both sides presented the most magnificent scene of vegetation, that I or my companions had ever beheld. The French travellers, who had just left the arid, leafless plains of Persia, and the naked plateaux of

Armenia, could not restrain their delight at the sight of this magic scenery. All the most luxurious landscapes, that my memory recalls in Italy, Anatolia, Africa, Rhodes, Samos, and the Balearic islands, cannot enter into competition with the banks of the Phasis. You must go to the New World to find their equal. I admit that the trees and creepers of Colchis partake rather of a south of Europe than a tropical character. Most of the sylvan productions, the vine, the beech, oak, and chesnut, occur in Germany, and it is only as you approach the shores of the Euxine, that you find evergreens of majestic size, including the box, stately bay trees, and common laurels, with leaves so lustrous that they appear dipped in gum arabic, myrtles, and the splendid *dshelkwa* tree, with a trunk three feet in diameter.

But the distinguishing features of the Colchian sylvan landscapes, consists in the double vesture presented by the parasitical plants, and in the extreme exuberance of all kinds of creepers. The prodigious growth of this description of plant, prevents the timber trees from attaining that great age which might be anticipated in a country where the woodman's axe is scarcely ever

heard. The same result attends this phenomenon in Colchis as that recorded in Brazil, by Martins. So great is the exuberance and conflict of vegetable life, that the remarkable fertility of the soil is inadequate to support it. All the plants are engaged in a perpetual contest for self-preservation, and injure each other much more than the thinner growth of our forests. Even the most lofty stems and branches are impeded and distressed by collision with their neighbours, and suffer a premature decay. Nor is it till long after they are dead, that you discover the fact; the dissolution of the giant being effectually concealed by a canopy of ivy, briars, hops, vines, and other creepers, veiling the sapless trunk, and forming festoons and garlands between the branches. So exuberant is the growth of these creepers, that they commonly form a beautiful dome of verdure covering the decay beneath, and swaying to and fro with every breeze. The traveller reposing beneath their grateful shade, looks up to discover the kind of tree that answers as a roof and umbrella against sunshine and rain, and he is surprised to find that he is resting beneath the withered arm of an aged oak, long since dead, but so embowered with parasitical

plants, that it looks as though it were still adorned with the bloom of youth.

Plants that creep humbly on the ground in Europe, proudly crown the tallest trees in Colchis. No plant differs so widely in this respect from the European, as the wild vine. Even the picturesque Italian festoons, so different from the stiff stakes and dwarf vines of Germany, give a very faint idea of the extraordinary development of the plant in Mingrelia, owing to the neglect of the inhabitants.

Parrot calls the vine "the queen of the forests of Imeritia and Mingrelia." It clasps the largest timber trees like a colossal snake, and fastens round them so closely that it seems bent on squeezing them to death. The vine shoots from tree to tree, embracing trunk and branches, and forming vast Laocoön groups. Even the crown of the highest oaks and beech trees, is not safe from the attacks of this vegetable boa-constrictor. The Colchian vine floats triumphant over many of these forests, presenting sometimes the appearance of a splendid streamer, at others, the canopy of a throne, and stretching out its waving shoots and elegant leaves in superb garlands. It abandons its purple

fruit above to the birds, for man on the Phasis only picks what he finds within his reach, and this greatly exceeds his wants.

On entering the Tsiwa canal, we found the forest flora so exuberant, that it impeded our progress. Bending or prostrate trees, covered with a web of creepers stretch far across the waters, and bathe their branches in the current. Floating trees are swept from above against these dams, are stopped in the course, increased by additions, and ultimately borne along by the tide, forming floating islands, as on the Mississippi and Amazon, though on a smaller scale. Animal life alone forms a great contrast between the Colchian and American forests.

Naturalists have drawn gorgeous pictures of the *fauna* of the New World, of the diamond blaze of its humming-birds, of the illumination of its beetles and butterflies, of the concerts of its apes, the chatter of its parrots, and the bass tones of its giant frogs. Nothing of the kind presents itself in Colchis. By day, the silence in these vast solitudes is almost oppressive, the only specimens of animal life consisting in a few wild ducks swimming up the stream, a few bee-eaters and starlings hunting for insects, a

deer slaking its thirst in the current, and a few cuckoos. At night, there is a little more life in the woods, and you may hear the growl of a bear, or the howl of a jackal. Szowitsch informs us that the migratory season is the only one when these regions appear animated. Then you hear the cooing of the wild doves, whilst the pelicans sail up the stream, the flamingoes keep watch on the shore, the splendid virgin crane (*grus virgo*) repose on the river bank, gathering strength for her journey; and the woods are alive with quails and birds of prey. But this state of things does not last long. The wanderers wing their flight to the Don, the Danube, and Southern Russia, where the steppes offer greater attraction to the crane than the verdure of Colchis.

A few Europeans have taken a more lasting affection for nature in Colchis, than those wandering birds. An Englishman, in particular, a mind of enterprising character, and cultivated mind, settled down in the wood, at a day's journey from Kutais, and lived like a hermit in the solitude. He rejects all connection with civilization, sweeps through the forest, gathers wild grapes, and chaces the bears and red

deer. When I considered the repose, freedom, and ease of such a life, I sometimes fancied that it might be pleasant to pass a life-time in this wilderness. The idea had a certain fascination, but it had also its terrors; and I thought of the poet who, after climbing the giddy precipices of the Alps, felt a longing for society, for the haunts of men, and the dust of crowded streets. Those singular individuals who have readily broken off all connection with society, and retired to the wilds and woods for the remainder of their days are made of different stuff from ourselves, who cannot so easily dispense with the amenities of culture and civilization. “*L'homme n'est pas fait pour vivre avec les arbres, avec le ciel pur, avec les fleurs et les montagnes, mais bien avec les hommes ses semblables.*” I adhere to these sentiments of George Sand, notwithstanding all the charms of Colchian scenery.

CHAPTER VII.

Redut-Kaleh—Visit to the Convent of Lugdidi Chopi—
Sugdidi, the Residence of the Dadians—The Convent of
Martwili—Beauty of the River Landscapes in Colchis—
Funereal Grove—Mouth of the Phasis—Homeric Vestiges
—Poti.

THE blue sky and splendid sunshine, the gay livery of the woods, and the mild and bright moonlight nights which had favoured us during our aquatic excursion, abandoned us on our arrival at Redut-Kaleh. We landed at this principal port of Mingrelia, amidst tempest, thunder and rain.

The town resembles a German fair, consisting of two interminable rows of wooden barracks, not much larger or convenient than the Frankfort fair-booths built on piles, raised a foot above the ground. Even

the public buildings and official residences are of wood. Notwithstanding the dampness of the climate and the multitude of wood-worms, which destroy a wooden house in a few years, this material has the preference. This results from the great abundance of timber in the immediate vicinity, whereas not a rock is to be seen throughout the fertile, but humid, soil of Mingrelia.

The erection of the houses on piles is a necessary precaution in this extremely damp region. In all the level parts of the Colchian coast, the raging billows have choked up the mouths of the rivers with sand-bars or shingle, and created extensive tracts of marsh. Nor has any part of the coast been more exposed to this accident than Mingrelia, which is watered by abundant streams, and being completely overgrown with an exuberant vegetation, is proportionally unhealthy. So damp and insecure is the foundation of the wooden barracks, comprising Redut-Kaleh, that after a few days rain, the passenger would be exposed to stick fast in the streets, were they not strewn with a deep bed of shingles.

It is well known that the Colchian coast has only one harbour, and the roadstead of Redut-Kaleh, which does not deserve the name, is one of the worst along the Caucasian shore, being exposed to the full force of the west and southerly gales, whilst the anchoring ground is unsafe for shipping, even in a slight storm.

The river Chopi which bisects Redut-Kaleh, and flows into the Euxine close by, has a tolerable depth of water, and would be navigable for vessels of considerable tonnage, if it were not choked with a sand-bar, like all Colchian streams. The expense of its removal would be somewhat heavy, and as the bar can only be passed by boats drawing three feet of water, all vessels that put in at this port, make all haste to land their cargo and escape into the offing. Nor do the anchorages of Poti at the mouth of the Rion, or of Anaklia, on the northern border of Mingrelia, offer greater security. It is only the small Turkish slave traders, with slight draught of water, that can frequent the coast with impunity, as regards tempests and gales.

Redut-Kaleh has never been a town according to European ideas. Nevertheless, it enjoyed considerable prosperity after the Russian occupation, during the space of ten years, owing to a ukase, which secured free-trade to the Trans-Caucasian provinces, during that interval. This stimulated the exertions of the Armenian merchants, and secured a considerable transit trade from Leipzig, through Georgia to Erivan, Tabris and Persia.

Hence, Redut-Kaleh became suddenly the greatest emporium on the east coast of the Black Sea. Speculators, ship-owners, and trading adventurers of all races and classes flocked into the place, which grew as though by magic, and the value of the imports, amounted at length to two million silver roubles annually. The returns consisted chiefly of home produce, maize, dried fruits, tobacco, skins, wax, fruit, and excellent timber, which found a ready market at Odessa. In fact, the whole country was enlivened and improved by the passage of the numerous caravans.

Unhappily this state of things ceased in 1831, notwithstanding the protests of the interested and the provident. The Moscow

merchants, and other short-sighted persons, thought to secure a fortune by monopoly and protection of Russian goods, and that trade could be forced to follow any course that might be chosen. Hence in 1832, free-trade was abolished, the Persian traffic passed to Erzeroum and Trebizond, enriching the Greek speculators of Stamboul, and the English manufacturers ; Redut-Kaleh became deserted, and the Moscow traders were disappointed. At a more recent date, Prince Woronzoff raised his powerful voice in favour of a removal of the prohibition system, but it is probably too late. Moreover, the road through Turkish Armenia, is safer for caravans, than the thievish Koord territory, between Toprakaleh and Bajasid, which is the route for caravans from Georgia to Persia.

We could find no vessel at Redut-Kaleh, bound for Trebizond : nor was the prospect of a sail very inviting, as a furious south-west wind lashed the waves into fury, dashing their foam over the mohills, whilst the roar of the breakers, and the whistling of the gale, sounded dismally through the chinks of our wooden barracks. The gale and its accompaniments sounded still more awful in

the night, resembling the wailing and shrieks of the drowned, swallowed up on that inclement coast. Not a spot of the Russian empire is more destructive to new arrivals, than the coast near the mouths of the Chopi and Phasis. One fourth of the Russian garrison, which is always limited in number, dies during the months of July, August and September. The survivors look more like spectres than men, all their northern energy having deserted their nerveless limbs, and they crawl about dragging their muskets painfully along the strand, which they protect against the approach of smugglers and slave traders. The civilian population does not suffer so severely as the garrison, because they are less exposed to the deleterious nuisances, and they live better. Yet all classes have contributed an abundant supply to the cemetery, situated twelve versts south of Redut-Kaleh.

It is impossible to conceive a more enchanting spot, than this burial ground. The graves lie scattered in a charming wood, under the shade of splendid trees, near the sea shore, whose everlasting music sounds like the wail of the departed, as it swells on the breeze

which makes a mournful sound in sweeping through the grove. The road leading to the cemetery is indescribably beautiful, being surrounded and surmounted by the prodigies of the most exuberant vegetation. The wood containing the burial ground consists of fruit trees of every variety, especially figs, cherries, plums, apples, and colossal nut trees, which scatter showers of fruit at every breeze, though no greedy hands are there to pick them. Intermingled with these are larger timber trees, including oak, lime, ash and beech, whilst the slender laurel, myrtle, and wild rose, crown and creep over the grave, and wild vines, ivy, and a hundred creepers hang round the crosses as natural garlands—presenting such a decoration as no European grave-yard can exhibit.

Whilst my companions seldom left the warm barrack of our Greek host, on account of the cold, damp weather, I made excursions into the neighbourhood, on foot or on horseback, accompanied by a Mingrelian lad, whose regular beauty was not inferior to the Paris of Canova. Though he had resided for some years at Redut-Kaleh, he had been spared by the fever. The

poisonous miasmas, which are so fatal to Russians, and all foreigners, which gradually undermine the health of the natives, and occasion premature decay, much sooner than the air of the uplands, had not yet expelled the roses from the cheeks of my guide, or enervated his elastic limbs.

The energy of early youth had bid defiance to the enemy. Nor are such instances uncommon in Mingrelia, even in the most insalubrious localities, but the influence of the climate is generally discernible in men of twenty years of age.

Our first visit was to the strand, where I enjoyed, once more the majestic spectacle of a storm on the Euxine. So soon as the rain had ceased, and the black tempest had made way for a white squall—the name given to cloudless hurricanes on the Black Sea, I made excursions to the Convent of Chopi, at the mouth of the Phasis to Sugdidi, the residence of the Dadian family, and to the Monastery of Martwili. My description of these places shall be brief, as they have been frequently visited, and well illustrated.

No such things as villages exist in Mingrelia. The houses lie scattered in the breaks and

openings of the woods, and even those of Chopi are dispersed over a great surface. The convent of that name, situated near the village, crowns the summit of a woody hill, overhanging the river. The eye is here greeted on all hands with the same luxurious vegetation, lending a picturesque charm to every part of the landscape.

The familiar trees of German forest scenery are seen intermingled on the uplands with wild arbutus with bright red bark, and above all, with Spanish chesnut trees, which shoot up to a great height in sunny spots, and spread out a canopy of branches and verdure equalling those of the plane and oak in dimensions, and exceeding them in splendour.

The vigorous trunks of the living trees are tightly embraced by a trellise work of various creepers, which cover the dead timber with festoons and garlands. Infinite is the diversity and the exquisite beauty of these brilliant parasites, which aspire to the highest twigs of the forest giants. Vegetation on the Chopi and Tschorokh, is as luxuriant as on the Phasis. The beauty of these landscapes was celebrated by the pen of Strabo and Xenophon, who, after his march

through the arid wastes of Persia and Armenia, seems to have been equally delighted with my French companions, at the contrast afforded by the sylvan splendour of Colchis.

The Convent of Chopi is inhabited by a few Georgian monks of the order of St. Basil, placed under an archimandrite. It was formerly one of the six bishoprics of Mingrelia, which were subsequently changed into abbeys. The edifice, like almost all Trans-Caucasian cloisters, is surrounded by a high wall. The convent church does not offer much worthy of note; the marble capitals of the columns showing a medley of the most opposite styles, and the clumsiest execution. The Monastery of Chopi is the St. Denis of the Mingrelian rulers. Since the time of Wawreck Dadian, the earthly remains of all the princes of the Dadian family are deposited here.

After a short stay, we rode hence to Sugdidi, the ancient capital of Mingrelia, and residence of the Dadian family. It stands in a lovely and fertile situation, and having been amply described by other travellers, I shall pass to other matters, simply remarking that the surrounding district of Odischi, is the richest in Trans-

Caucasia, save Guria, and that it contains the remains of an ancient city, whose history is quite unknown.

The situation of the convent at Martwili is almost more enchanting even than that of Sugdidi.

As Dubois de Montpereaux has presented a minute description of this convent, we shall omit all notice of the edifice, and content ourselves with observing, that the finest view imaginable is descried from the top of its walls. The entire district of Colchis, with its magic sylvan scenery, lay extended before us. The sky had become clear again, and was purer and more transparent than in Midsummer. The whole of Mingrelia and Imeritia, lay like a picture straight before us, cased in by a gilded frame-work of mountain slopes. The eye embraced the entire course of the Phasis, Chopi, Engur, and Tschenitskali, whose waters are fed by the glaciers and snows of the Pasantia—the highest peak of the Caucasus, after the Elbrouss and Kasbeck. This majestic snowy pile, with its two silver peaks towering above the great chain of the Caucasian Alps, presenting a long row of snowy horns, pyramids, and domes, forms the background of the Colchian

paradise on one side, and on comparing its cloud capped summit with the silver pyramid of the Elbrous, the spectator feels doubtful to which should be assigned the pre-eminence. To the south and eastward, the eye strays and dwells among the plains and valleys of Mingrelia, Imeritia, and Guria, which are slightly broken by gentle undulations. The white summits of the mountain chain of Adschara and Akhalzik, were quite perceptible to the southward, whilst to the west, the blue mist hanging over the mouths of the Phasis and Ingur, showed the watery expanse of the Euxine. The soft beauty of the Colchian scenery, near the convent, is only equalled by the sublimity of the back-ground of mountains to the southward.

A sharp ride on our sturdy Mingrelian steeds brought us back the same day to Redut-Kaleh, where I found the three Frenchmen negotiating a passage to Trebizond, with a Turkish skipper. The latter was desirous of starting forthwith; for he well knew the dangers of the Euxine during the Equinox. His charges were moderate; but our Greek host grudged even this unexpected advantage to the poor infidel. To prevent the en-

gagement, the worthy son of Hellas indulged in every imaginable falsehood, portraying the perils of the passage in pitch black colours, dwelling especially on the insecurity of a crazy Turkish bark, with clumsy mariners, under the command of an ignorant captain, and even venturing a hint that the Turk would not scruple to give us up to the thievish natives, in some secluded part of the coast. My travelling companions, as well as myself, were too accustomed to Greek lies, to be moved by these representations. They made, however, a deep impression on Pater Benedetto. The Capuchin was not well-versed in human character ; and his weakness and timidity were easily deceived. Some Mingrelians, whom the Greek had gained over to the plot, confirmed his statements, and made use of the monk to work on the fears of the ladies. All sorts of difficulties were also placed in our way by the Russian authorities. Our luggage was threatened with a rigid scrutiny, and we could only avert the infliction by a shower of silver roubles.

While my companions were wrangling and swearing, I made an excursion to Poti and to

the mouth of the Phasis. The road leads partly through the magic sylvan scenery of Colchis, which, in every spot that is not invaded by water and marsh, offers a profusion and luxury inconceivable to the untravelled European. The three most genial seasons of the year appear blended into one, in this sunny climate. Thus, whilst those plants which Colchis shares with Germany were already tinged with autumnal hues, the half-ripe grapes, which are later in coming to maturity in Mingrelia than on the Rhine, reminded you of summer; whereas the profusion of evergreens, of wild flowers, and of vernal plants, together with the soft, voluptuous atmosphere, cheated the imagination with thoughts of spring. The nearer I approached the mouth of the Phasis, the mightier waxed the timber-trees, whilst the exuberance and dimensions of the creepers seemed to rival the vegetation of the Mississippi and Orinoco. Nor was this profusion confined to the land; for the waters were covered with innumerable *nymphææ*, exhibiting their splendid white and yellow clusters, reflected in the crystal mirror.

After a ride of three hours, I arrived at the

Poti and the mouth of the Phasis. A blue mist hovered around the vast garden of Guria, the most splendid part of Colchis. Unfortunately, I was obliged to rest satisfied with a distant view of this paradise. After a short stay at Poti, I walked a few miles up the Phasis, and was ferried across the stream a few miles below Korki.

A mild and tranquil day, the gentle whispering of the breeze in the wood, and the melancholy notes of the cuckoo encouraged a meditative mood; and I indulged in lucubrations about the Homeric Odysseus, whom some scholars would have traced in his wanderings to the coast of Colchis.

I was interrupted by my guide saying: "It will be dark, Sir, before we reach the krepost; and we have eaten nothing to-day." The youth had followed and watched me anxiously as I strolled among the thickets, and put an end to my Homeric speculations by a very prosaic appeal to our appetite. Yet I was greeted that same evening by a nymph, "tall, slender, and lovely," at Kirke, after we landed at a hut near Poti. She was the daughter of a Gurian fisherman who had built his hovel there. The

Gurian maid was not attired in a silver-white garment, with gold-glittering girdle ; but was arrayed, on the contrary, in gaudy-coloured rags, only half concealing her beautiful young limbs. Her face was unveiled ; nor have I ever seen more delicate features, or a more charming figure, even in Mingrelia. I caused my guide to ask the fisherman, if he would give me shelter for the night. A courteous word and the chink of roubles removed all difficulties—the fisherman made me welcome. The lovely daughter was not at all intimidated by the strangers ; and one of our sailors told me afterwards that the father would glady have sold her to the Turks ; but the girl preferred her wretched home on the Phasis, to the most brilliant descriptions of the Stamboul harems. A few years ago, the father would not have much heeded her reluctance ; but since the Russian occupation, matters have somewhat changed ; and the most greedy parent cannot dispose of his daughter against her will. The Gurian maid handed me dried fruit, gruel, and maize bread, with sparkling wine (here the portion of beggars), though not in silver pitchers and golden goblets, as at the time of Kirke, but in an earthern jug and wooden cup.

Luxury has long deserted the land, nor has the Golden Fleece been recovered, even under Russian rule. Nature, indeed, is as bountiful as ever, the flora as exuberant as of yore ; and classic beauty is still stamped on man's features in Colchis. But though flowers, butterflies and birds are happy and free in the Colchian Paradise, the people are enslaved, unhappy, and wretched in the finest of countries.

Night had descended on the Phasis. The fisher's maid prepared my bed, which consisted not of "gorgeous pillows, purple covers, and downy sheets," but of bare straw, hard maize-leaves, and rushes. Thinking of the changes wrought by time, I kept out the cold with my burka, and slept, whilst the old fisherman and my guide lay by the fire, and the maid dissappeared. Nor did I see her again.

The Russian fortress of Poti, which was built by the Turks, on the left bank of the Phasis, contains nothing remarkable. Near it are situated the remains of a Roman castle. Not a trace, however, remains of the Colchian Emporium of Phasis, so great has been the alteration wrought in the Delta, by the deposits of the river.

An island opposite the Roman castle contained the ruins of a temple of Cybele, seen by Chardin, and it is probable, that this district embraces other antiquities, but few would venture to explore them, in these unhealthy and impenetrable morasses and thickets.

The sea has retired from the walls of Poti, within the last hundred-and-fifty years, and the place is, if possible, more unhealthy than Redut-Kaleh. When occupied by the Turks, the garrison used to retire in summer to the uplands, to escape the malaria. The Russians who attach less value to human life, leave their garrison, and military colony at Poti, throughout the year, and find it accordingly necessary to supply it entirely anew every ten years. The Muscovite government has often thought of founding an important fortress and port at Poti, but has been deterred by the fatal nature of the climate. Paskiewitsch, Rosen, and others, have tried to make it more salubrious, by thinning the woods ; but all efforts were vain. Poti still remains a nest of fever. Dubois proposed to Rosen, to change the bed of the Phasis, drain the marshes, and secure a good harbour and island navigation, by important

works. But such a gigantic undertaking would require an immense outlay, and though Prince Woronzoff is reported to have made similar proposals, the Emperor Nicholas did not adopt them, preferring to build splendid barracks, and have a brilliant guard protecting Russia from the invasion of Occidental and democratic ideas.

CHAPTER VIII.

Reflections on Colchis—Present State of Mingrelia—Sail to Lasistan—Stay at Batoum—The Lasian People.

THE history of Colchis having been frequently and amply illustrated, we shall not dwell on its annals, simply remarking that the existence of an ancient and high degree of culture on the banks of the Phasis, is a mysterious, but well attested fact. Passing to the present time, we regret to be obliged to admit that Mingrelia, with its gorgeous vegetation, lovely sky, and handsome population: a land apparently blessed by Heaven with every advantage—is not a happy country. If we analyze its history, its government, and the social condition of the people, we turn away with disgust and horror from this Colchian Eden.

The stupid tyranny of its ruler, is a greater scourge than the pestilential miasmas. The feudal system is still in force there, with its most odious features, and the little that escapes the rapacity of the Lord, is eaten up by Cossacks, *employés*, and a host of Russian locusts. There exists four classes in the population, as in Circassia. First, the Dadian, or king, who acknowledged the Russian supremacy in 1804, and who enjoys absolute power save in matters of life and death. Next come the princes, who have considerable landed property, and are occasionally refractory. The remainder of the land belongs to the petty nobility, who can grind the peasant with impunity. The only difference between the condition of Mingrelian and Russian serfs, is, that the former has more method, and a traditional system of much older date. This system is some security, as no Colchian dreams of violating conservative usage. Thus a peasant who is required to plough for his lord would refuse to thrash or make hay for him. But they accomplish their traditional duties without a murmur. On the other hand, it would be imprudent to impose new services, as the mountains and frontiers are at hand for a

refuge. If the tyranny of a Prince become intolerable, his peasant commonly flies over the Turkish border, and accepts Islam. Yet such cases are rare, as the Mingrelian, like all uncultivated people, is intensely patriotic.

The worst kind of oppression to which the people are exposed, is the great hunts of the Dadians. The ruler of Mingrelia, like his subjects, is the slave of custom. His ancestors were fond of the chase, and accordingly David Dadian has become a zealous Nimrod, and sweeps over every part of the kingdom, hunting deer, bears, and hyenas, through brake and thicket. The impenetrable forests will secure plenty of game to Colchis for centuries. David Dadian has plenty of country residences, but he prefers to take up his quarters at his nobles and peasants, because his sire and grandsire did so before him. Nor does he leave the farm before his retainers have eaten the last chicken and loaf. Then the hunt sweeps onward and settles on another victim. This is the worst kind of oppression, yet no subject complains, because it is a traditional custom. I have never met with so conservative or stereotyped a

race as the Mingrelians, and many of their institutions remind me of the castes of India.

The Russian rule has occasioned considerable modifications in Imeritia. The serfs of the native kings have been changed into crown peasants, and have only to pay a very small tax in kind. Whilst a just and firm Governor-general holds the reins in Trans-Caucasia, they have not much to fear from the *employés*, and their lot is enviable, compared with that of the Mingrelians. Yet, even in Imeritia, this transformation has been very imperfect. The feudal immunities of the Imeritian nobles have been left untouched. The Russian government has certainly had the power, but not the inclination, to interfere with the traditional relations of princes, nobles, and serfs in Trans-Caucasia, nor has it reformed the iron feudal system which still holds sway there. In this respect, the imperial administration has effected much less in Trans-Caucasia than in Poland, having always sought for support in the Caucasus, rather among the nobles than the people. General Rajewski, a man of great intelligence, was of opinion, that the only way to break the resis-

tance of the Circassians, was to side with the people, against the nobles.

On my return to Redut-Kaleh from Poti, I found my French companions prepared to start. The bargain had been concluded with the Turkish captain, and the greediness of the Russian *employés* had been satisfied. We put out into the Black Sea in a bark, manned by five Turks and one Armenian. The sun shone clear and bright in the cloudless sky, and as there was a complete calm, our crew were obliged to take to the oars. Our gallant bark swept over the dark green mirror of the Euxine, and before us were spread the lustrous mountains of Lasistan, to the south-east of the Russian border-fortress of St. Nicholas, a range of hills which, though inferior to the Caucasus in majesty, presents a more ornamental background than any that the shores of the Mediterranean can offer.

The first Lasian village beyond the border is styled Tschoruk-su, from the name of a small stream in its vicinity. The place belongs to the old Pashalik of Akhalzik, and consists of a few houses. Our bark cast anchor several fathoms from the shore, and the Turkish sailors carried

us on their shoulders to the beach. A curious crowd of Turks and Lasians was assembled on the strand, and greeted the arrival of Pater Benedetto with an explosion of laughter, when he appeared, trembling with fear, and hurried through the water, borne on the brawny shoulders of a Turk, whilst his naked legs hung sprawling beneath his brown tunic. Our companion, Abbé Vidal, who was a jovial fellow, and a good draughtsman, immediately drew a sketch of the group, and showed it to the Capuchin, who laughed good-humouredly at the joke. We only stayed a short time at Tschoruk-su, and I employed the interval to explore the vicinity. The captain added to our stock of provisions here, and then we started for Batoum. The presence of the seven greyhounds, and of the black pug, which the old French lady fondled like a baby, was a great cause of grumbling to the Turkish crew, as Osmanlis are well known to regard the canine species as unclean. Their mutinous disposition was, however, overruled by the captain.

A languid west wind brought us to Batoum, the most important trading town on the Lasian coast. Our little vessel was there drawn up on

shore, as there were many symptoms of an approaching tempest. We were hospitably entertained at the house of the British Consul, and of an Italian merchant, who was shipping a cargo on board a fine three-master in the port. We did not resist his pressing invitation to share his board, and did full justice to his caviare, venison, and fresh fish. A couple of bottles of Gurian wine added to the cheer, and increased the inexhaustible eloquence of the Frenchmen and of Pater Benedetto, who was delighted to find a countryman here.

The Italian merchant was very familiar with the Lasian land and people, describing the former as inexhaustible in fertility. Even the prolific plains of Lombardy do not yield more numerous or more copious crops. The principal diet of the natives consists, as in Mingrelia, of maize, gomi, and wild fruit. There is abundance of flocks and herds in the uplands. The exports of Batoum consist chiefly of skins, wax, honey, and, above all, timber for ship-building, of which an unlimited supply is obtained from the oak forests on the slopes, and at the foot of the mountains. The inhabitants of Batoum are mostly Turks and Lasians, with whom commer-

cial dealings are much more agreeable than with Greeks and Armenians. Before the humiliation of Osmanli pride, in the last Russian war of 1829, it was quite intolerable; but now, the Turks have become friendly and tractable people, and every connoisseur of the East places their private virtues much higher than those of all Oriental Christians put together. The Italian merchant pronounced a high encomium on the honesty of the Turks, in trade and in private life. The population of Batoum speak the Gurian-Lasian idiom—a branch of the Georgian tongue. They are partly sprung from Gurian renegades, whose blood has mingled with the Lasian Moslems.

The roadstead of Batoum, is, perhaps, the best and safest on the East coast of the Euxine, I admit that the anchorage is small, but the vessels moored there were perfectly sheltered from the storm, that soon after swept over us. During our three days' residence at Batoum, we saw many armed mountaineers of the Adschar tribe—distinct in type, and tongue, from the other Lasian clans. I often met them, also, in my excursions in the woods. They were handsome men, and saluted me gravely as they passed. Their behaviour to Europeans is

free from hostile superciliousness, or cringing cowardice. So secure is the traveller in their district, that the Italian merchant once made the journey to Trebizond without any escort, save his Polish servant. These people do not carry arms to protect themselves from thieves, but because of blood feuds which are deeper rooted among them than any other Caucasian tribe. Fearful tales were related to me of the consequences of this unrelenting practice, which has extinguished whole classes, including infants at the breast, nor have all the efforts of the Turkish Government succeeded in extirpating it.

The Lasian tribes have certainly been long nominally subject to the Turkish Padishah, but they have in reality enjoyed almost complete independance under native chieftains, called Derebeys, or Lords of the Valley. The Pashas of Trebizond and Kars, were till lately, native Lasians, and the Pashas of Bajasid Musch and Wan, native Koords. The Porte used to rest satisfied with a small tribute, and leave the tribes to themselves. Latterly, however, the Sultan and his advisers, have striven to confirm their authority in Lasistan, by introducing the

Nizam, and confirming the Lords of the Valley under the title of Ajan. There are fifteen of these Ajans in Lasistan, but we have not space to enumerate their names and possessions.

During our stay at Batoum, I made an excursion to the mouth of the Tschoruk, which is as broad and deep a stream as the Rion, with a bar of sand, preventing navigation to ships of large tonnage. The forests surrounding Batoum, have larger timber than those of Mingrelia, but there is a less exuberant growth of creepers, and my crop of natural curiosities was not so abundant as in Colchis. The character of the Flora is also different here, and at Trebizond, and though the scenery in Turkish Colchis, is very picturesque, it does not equal Mingrelia in beauty. Nevertheless, the basin of Risa is the only spot on the Euxine that yields a growth of orange trees.

After taking leave of the Italian merchant, we put to sea before dawn, and our little bark darted like a coquettish swan over the Pontian waves to Trebizond. The first flush of dawn, tinged the Lasian uplands, and once more our eyes were greeted with the magic spectacle of the Caucasian Alps. In mighty chains, they

raised their icy monuments, and giant citadels above the verdant plains of Colchis, into the blue ether, and soon their rugged peaks were converted into glowing volcanoes, by the rays of the rising sun. This was our last salutation to these noble mountains, the home of the most gallant of men.

PART III.

PERSIA AND THE KOORDS.

CHAPTER I.

Steam to Trebizond—Colchian Coast—The Circassian Slave Trade—Arrival at Trebizond—Abdullah Pacha.

IT was on a fine spring morning, that I steamed out of the Bosphorus into the Black Sea, *en route* for Trebizond, having secured a place on the packet ‘Stamboul,’ belonging to the Austrian Steam-Navigation Company. The sea was calm; and though, perhaps, not equalling the polished mirror of a Swiss lake, on a summer’s day, our sail was so agreeable and tranquil, that for the first time, I made a voyage on the Pontos Axeinos, without suffering from sea-sickness.

The vessel steered so near the shore, that we could plainly distinguish the outline of every

hill, and all the sinuosities of the coast, which consists of a low range of hills, covered with grass and brushwood. The ‘Stamboul,’ a steamer of 120-horse power, proceeds every ten days along the Anatolian coast, calling regularly at Samsoun, but passing by many picturesque and attractive spots on the way, calculated to induce a traveller to linger there. Two Turkish steamers also described the same voyage at that time, every ten days, contending in fierce and angry opposition, with the Austrian boat.

This time, the number of deck passengers amounted to three hundred. Greeks, Turks, and Armenians, had the greatest number of representatives in the motley crowd. Besides these, were several Persians, Tartars, and four Circassians. The first and second places were very scantily filled; for Europeans do not often visit the southern shores of the Black Sea. The tourist generally retraces his steps westward, as soon as he has satisfied his curiosity with the picturesque wonders of the seven-hilled city of the East. There was a young Englishman in the best cabin, a Mr. Ross, a native of Malta, and attached to the English Consulate at Mossul, to which place he was returning,

by Samsoun and Tokat. He had already been that way, and complained of the insecurity, the heat, and the tediousness of travelling in Mesopotamia. Botta has, however, thrown a charm over the hitherto monotonous life of the Europeans at Mossul, by his magnificent antiquarian discoveries ; and both English and French now emulate each other in exploring the mythical ruins of Nineveh, and the antiquities of Babylon.

On a former occasion, when returning from the Caucasus, by Trebizonde to Constantinople, the number of passengers was much more considerable, and must have amounted to nearly a thousand, who were pressed together on the deck, like herrings. Amongst them were thirty slaves, closely veiled ; they were from Colchis and Circassia, and were en route for Constantinople. The nefarious trade of the slave-dealer in charge of them, was visible in his countenance. I have seen uglier men in the East, but seldom one with so repulsive an expression of face. This man's physiognomy bore no resemblance to that good-natured slave-dealer described by Eugène Sue, in his '*Atar-Gul.*' This fellow was rather thin than fat, and wore

a caftan of rich stuff, bordered with fur. His countenance expressed neither shame, nor consciousness of the disgraceful nature of his calling ; the love of gain predominated ; and his self-satisfied bearing was indicative of the value he placed on his wealth. He considered his slaves as so much merchandise ; and for that reason, bestowed some greater share of attention on the best looking, as being of more value to him. They were dressed in better stuffs, were allowed more delicate food, and even coffee. These he valued at from twenty-five to thirty thousand piastres. Girls of less personal attractions, from twelve to sixteen years old, at from two to three thousand piastres. The latter came principally from the mountainous parts of Circassia ; and being daughters of poor (Pschilt) serfs, had been sold by their parents, from poverty, or by the (Work) noblemen to whom they belonged, for gain. The most beautiful and gracefully formed of them, came from Guria and Adschara.

The captain of the 'Stamboul' steamer was a Dalmatian by birth, but of Italian origin ; he spoke Turkish fluently. He told me that, notwithstanding the strict blockade of the

Circassian coast, and the constant watchfulness of the Cossack boats, which ply to and fro the different Russian kreposts (forts), in order to detect any concealed slave ships ; yet, in spite of every obstacle, the slave trade flourished. The only result of this strict surveillance has been to enhance the value of the merchandize, and to heighten the eagerness of both trader and purchaser. The slave ships take advantage of winter, when the Russian blockade squadron seek shelter at Sevastopol. At that season, even the Cossack boats rarely brave the stormy waters of the Euxine, which, since the time the Grecian Argus steered across them, in search of the Golden Fleece, have engulphed so many vessels, and devoured so many victims. The fury of the tempests, so frequent during winter, and which scare the light Russian cruisers, and even steamers, are braved by the slave ships ; these sail at every season, and in all weather—thirst of gain proving more powerful than even the terrors of the Euxine.

The coast of Paphlagonia is higher and more mountainous than that of Bithynia, near the Thracian Bosphorus. Although we were at a considerable distance from the shore, two chains of

hills running parallel with the coast, were clearly visible ; that to the south being the higher of the two, and their peaks more boldly defined, pointed, and picturesque, than the mountains on the Bithynian side. The loftiest is named on the map, "Monte Sacro." The Turks call it "Gelembe-Burunnu." The mountain rises not far from the promontory of Septe, to the west of Sinope. They predict that it will be destroyed in the course of about twenty years by an earthquake—that it is much altered in shape, and decreased in height, and that formerly, ships sailing midway between the coast of Asia, and of the Crimea, could see, at the same time, the tent-shaped peak of the Taurian, Tschadir-Dagh, and the loftiest summit of the Paphlagonian ridge. This savours of the fabulous. It seemed to me that its peak has the unbroken form of a lengthened cone, usual in rocks of trachyte-porphyritic formation, also, that the vast bulk of the mountain would scarcely admit of a landslip, affecting any considerable fall or settlement of its peak, or any material change of its shape.

The remarkably rapid descent towards the east is very striking, it resembles the ruins of

some giant castle, towering far above the adjoining mountains, although those to the west approach it in height. This southern chain of mountains attains one half the elevation of that to the north, which runs parallel with the sea coast, and is partially covered with copse and brushwood. The highest peaks were already free from snow, though it still lay in a few isolated nooks and fissures. A long stratum of clouds rested motionless about half-way up the mountains, whilst their cloudless summits were bathed in the deep blue ether. As far as I could judge by the eye, I should imagine these mountains to be considerably higher than the Zaila, on the opposite coast of the Crimea. Their shapes are finer and more picturesque, and their slopes richer in wood and pasture, interspersed with patches of arable land.

The third morning of our voyage, both sea and land were enshrouded in a mist so thick, that we were obliged to remain stationary at some distance from the shore. These dense morning fogs are very frequent in the months of April and May, on the south side of the Euxine.

Between Sinope and Samsoun, the Kisil-

Irmak flows into the sea ; its fresh waters tinging the sea for more than a couple of miles of a dingy yellow colour. During summer, it dwindle into an inconsiderable stream, its shores are low, marshy, and unhealthy, clothed with wood, and a thick under growth of bushes.

The mountains here recede several miles inland, but their beautiful peaks remain visible. Our vessel was, this day, frequently visited by swallows, turtle doves, hedge sparrows, snipes, and pelicans, which flew towards us sometimes singly, sometimes together. I could not tell whether they were migrating, or merely roving. Two dolphins, smaller and more beautiful than those of the Bosphorus, followed our vessel, and gave wonderful evidence of their powers of swimming.

Towards mid-day, we anchored in the harbour of Samsoun, and discharged both passengers and goods. The town lies at the extremity of a bay, opening towards the east, and north-east, and concealed behind very strongly-fortified walls, the construction of which is ascribed by Turkish tradition to the Genoese. The roadstead is bad and unsafe ; large ships are obliged to anchor at some considerable distance from the town.

There were eight merchantmen of medium tonnage in the harbour. The Turkish population of Samsoun is said to be one of the most fanatical of Anatolia. Rajas (heretics) are not permitted to live within the town. They inhabit the neighbouring villages, which are picturesquely grouped upon the mountain slopes, surrounded by meadows, fruit gardens, and olive plantations. The largest of the villages is called, Jeni-Koi, it stands immediately above Samsoun, and is exclusively inhabited by Greeks. The other Raja communities are divided almost equally into Greek and Armenian villages.

Besides fruit and olives, the neighbourhood of Samsoun produces quantities of Indian corn, tobacco, millet and rice. There is also shooting and fishing in abundance. The marshy thickets of brushwood are filled with numbers of pheasants, woodcocks, and snipes, which are to be bought for a mere nothing.

The little towns of Unieh Kerasunt and Tereboli, are charmingly situated on the sea coast. The country here increases in magnificence, and the far-famed loveliness of Colchis, begins in all its variety of form. At Cape Hieron-Oros, at about six hours

west of Trebizond, we were so close on shore, that we were able to enjoy all the beauty of the landscape; it was impossible not to regret the indefatigable whirl of our paddle wheels, which permitted only too fleeting an enjoyment of this charming spot, where it would have been so delightful to remain stationary, in order to contemplate its beauties, somewhat more at our leisure, instead of hastening by with all the unsympathizing speed of steam. Luxuriant green hills, of softly rounded form, rise here from the sea. To their very summits, these foam besprinkled elevations are covered with a fertile soil, and clothed in a rich vegetation of every shade of green. Groves of trees are gracefully grouped about, interspersed with gardens, pastures and fields of Indian corn. Amongst the trees were many kinds of evergreen. Olive, oak, box and chesnut trees seemed to predominate, whilst bushes, mountain herbs, blossoming shrubs and wild flowers, decked the edges of the groves with a circlet of variegated splendour. Here and there only was a point of naked rock visible, showing the formation of this magnificent chain of hills, the surface

of which gave birth to such a fulness of vegetable life. Numerous valleys and ravines crossing the chain in different directions, opened a charming perspective into the fertile interior, whilst the radiance of spring smiled forth from every cleft, valley and ravine. Whatever may be written about the natural beauties of Colchis, can only convey a very imperfect conception of the reality. Turkey does not possess the most lovely portion of this classic land, where, in ancient times, the worship of Apollo flourished, the God of day, whose fertilizing beams gave birth to the prolific nature of its soil. Guria and Mingrelia are still more paradisiacal, than the district of Trabisan, and the banks of Phasis surpass in loveliness, the lofty green valleys of Jeschil-Irmak and of Tschorokh.

We landed at Trebizond before noon. This celebrated place, was long the residence of an independant sovereign. It has been described of late, by more than one writer of eminence, Fallermayer's brilliant descriptions have had so great and deserved approbation, that I dare not venture on the same ground, and will, therefore, spare my reader any

detailed account of the picturesque beauty of the town, and the enchantment of the ever verdant groves and glades of Colchis.

A letter of introduction from Sir Stratford Canning, to the English Vice-Consul Mr. Stevens, procured for me a polite reception and comfortable quarters, in the house of a Greek merchant, a *protégé* of the English Consulate. At Trebizond there is a very general and lively interest taken in passing events in the Caucasus, and on the frontiers of Russia.

This town is the rendezvous of all Circassians and Abschasiens, who maintain a connexion, for political ends, with Turkey ; of all the slave-dealers, who obtain from Circassia a constant supply for the harems of rich Turks ; of European adventurers, who, after trying their fortunes at Cairo and Constantinople as military instructors, turn towards Circassia as a new field for adventure ; and, lastly, of all refugees from Russia, and deserters from the army. Trebizond is in a measure the only town beyond Russian jurisdiction, in which it is possible to get correct intelligence of the military movements, and doings in the Caucasus. All the

foreign Consuls, principally devote themselves to gain such information for their respective governments, particularly the English. England, as is known, has no Consul in any part of Circassia, not even at Tiflis, the government of Russia having expressly deprecated the presence of any British representative throughout the Caucasus. Since Mr. Urquhart's visit to the Caucasian shores—since the seizure of the Vixen, and the adventures of Messrs. Bell, Longworth, and Neith amongst the Circassians, the mistrust of the Russian government has redoubled towards all the English travelling there. In some measure, England is esteemed by both Turks and mountaineers, as the protecting power, of all anti-Russian elements; and France though a rival, was seldom, and Austria never, the subject of conversation. The French Consul, M. de Clairembault, has shown his benevolence in secretly sending Polish deserters, from the Russian army to Constantinople, where they form quite a little colony, and are assisted in gaining a livelihood by Count Zamoyski, and Prince Czartoryski.

The Russian Consul, M. de Ghersi, a Genoese by birth, held at this time the most prominent

position in the town ; well bred and agreeable, he knew how to secure the respect of the Turks, and his own authority, by his almost princely munificence. He never visited the Pasha without expending at least a thousand piastres. Each cawass, secretary, and hanger-on of every kind, expected nothing less than a golden backshish from the representative of Moscow's mighty Padischa, and M. de Ghersi, did his utmost to gratify them. The most popular virtue with the Orientals is liberality, and the unusual generosity of the Russian Consul suppressed even the whispers of detraction, which his somewhat warm admiration for the fair Orientals might have given rise to. The influence of M. de Ghersi, with the crowd surrounding the Pacha, was undisputed. Even the cruel and tyrannical Abdullah Pacha—who, backed by the powerful protection of Riza Pacha in the Divan, ventured to oppress with impunity—condescended to show the most fawning servility to M. de Ghersi, as he well knew that the Russian Consul was the only man capable of ruining him by an official collision.

Abdullah Pacha was the last Dere-Bey of

Lasistan, invested with the dignity of Pacha of Trebizond, which had become hereditary in his family—the Porte having imagined that the wild mountain tribes of Lasistan and Koordistan were more likely to yield obedience to a native and hereditary chief. After the removal of Abdullah from the Pachalic, the Porte thought it expedient to try a genuine Turk in his place—and Halil Pacha, brother-in-law of the Sultan, succeeded the last of the Dere-Beys.

Abdullah Pacha's administration forms, in the modern history of the Osmanli, an episode similar to that of the Turkish Nero, Amurath IV., and furnishes a remarkable proof that the attempt, rather than the carrying out of reform, proposed in the Hatti-Scheriff of Gulhaneh, has not put an end to the possibility of abuse of power in Turkey—as ignorant or dreamy Europeans believe, who already have faith in an Ottoman constitution.

Abdullah was a man worn out by former excesses, and broken in health : his sallow countenance and drooping eyelids were very repulsive. His infirmities and sufferings made him splenetic and cruel. Fortunately Con-

stantinople was not too far from Trebizond for him to set at defiance the wholesome restraint of the European Embassies and Consulates. These served as a check upon him, and obliged him to observe some discretion, even in his cruelties. After the accomplishment of some misdeed, which even in a Turkish Pachalic, would excite murmurs, or be likely to figure in the consular reports ; it was usual for several hundred purses to find their way from Abdullah's treasury to the Golden Horn, with the worthy intention of securing the intercession of Riza Pacha and his partizans.

I pass over numerous instances of this Turkish satraps' misdeeds, to choose one of recent occurrence, which I had from a reliable source, and which took place under the mild rule of Abdul Medjid, and of a ministry, for the most part, favourable to reform, and at no very great distance from the capital.

Some Turks and Rajas, who came with a caravan from Erzeroum to Trebizond, had been apprehended under suspicion of murdering a Levantine merchant under Russian protection. There was no conclusive evidence of their guilt, only amongst their baggage, effects, supposed

to have belonged to the murdered man, were found. The accused protested they had bought them at the bazaar at Erzeroum, of a Jew pedlar—a statement in which there was nothing improbable. Abdullah Pacha seized upon this affair as a welcome opportunity of showing his zeal for the protection of Russian subjects, and his esteem for M. de Ghersi, as well as to gratify his own diabolical nature. He ordered, in detail, the tortures to be used, in order to extort a confession from the prisoners. The Christians were to have their head encircled by an iron hoop, to be compressed tightly round ; if this did not succeed, it was to be applied red hot. Some of them had a heated wire thrust through the most sensitive parts of the body. The night after these tortures, one of the Rajas died.

Mr. Stevens reported these horrible doings to Sir Stratford Canning, who, from common feelings of humanity, sent a dragoman from the embassy to the Grand Vizir and to Riza Pacha, to inform them of the whole circumstances of the affair ; he, as a foreign diplomatist, having no official right to interfere in the matter. Both Pachas replied that the Porte

would take special cognizance of the affair. They added, that no doubt the praiseworthy zeal of Abdullah Pacha to punish the murderers of a man under the protection of one of the greatest of the European powers, had led him further than was quite justifiable. However, the affair blew over like many others, without the Pacha being called upon to render any account of such proceedings.

A few weeks later, in one of his customary paroxysms of splenetic rage, he ordered a Greek, not a subject of Turkey, but of the Hellenic kingdom, to be flogged to death, and nothing but the energetic intervention of Mr. Stevens, who received him into his house, could have saved him.

It is a fact worthy of notice, that the Russian Consul, M. de Ghersi, whose amiability and hospitality have been extolled by all European travellers, and especially by the talented Fallermayer, never, by any chance, made an effort to prevent these horrible tragedies. When his intercession in favour of this Greek was solicited, this amiable gentleman coldly replied, that being the Russian and not the Greek Consul, he could not interfere, yet

if anything happened in the least prejudicial to the Persian transfer business, if through the carelessness of the baschi of a caravan, goods were lost, or otherwise stolen by thievish Koords or Lesghians, thereby diminishing the dues of the rich consignees of Trebizond, then, M. de Ghersi, as Consul and merchant, was never backwards in seeking redress at the hands of the Pacha.

CHAPTER II.

Journey from Trebizond to Gumysch-Haneh — Colchian Mountain Landscapes — Dangerous Pass—A sagacious Horse—Comparison of the Scenery with Switzerland—Gumysch-Haneh—Adventures of a Polish Deserter from the Caucasus.

MR. STEVENS, the British Consul at Trebizond, who was familiar with the country, advised me to travel post as far as Erzeroum, and to proceed thence by caravan. Accordingly, I left Trebizond on the afternoon of the 26th of May, accompanied by the Pole, John Saremba, and by a Turkish guide. I had three saddle horses, and two pack horses, which were exchanged for fresh animals, at every post station. My Turkish postillions were also renewed at every relay, and I was thus presented with specimens of the most

various nationalities and manners, from Osmanli grandezza, indolence and loyalty, (well known Turkish qualities), to half savage Lasians, and wily Armenians.

The country rises suddenly and precipitously to the south of Trebizond, and after a ride of half an hour, we halted to breathe the horses. We stopped on the smooth turf, covering a mountain slope, from whence we obtained a last and magnificent view of the Colchian coast. The fissures and declivities of the mountains, the glens and the highland terraces were resplendent in the gorgeous livery of a Colchian spring. Both sides of our path were adorned with the exuberant foliage and gay blossoms of the Colchian flora, with their variegated festoons and garlands. The barometer showed the elevation of this spot above the sea, to be 1170 French feet.

Haschiolan is the name of the first little river which comes tumbling down the mountain depth, close to the caravan road, to the south of Trebizond. The next stream is the Tschebislik, in spring a copious muddy stream, swelled by the melting snow, whose course we followed for a long distance. On all hands, there was

abundance of short brushwood, but no timber trees. The number of mineral springs in this district is quite surprising, and it is probable that the Colchian-Armenian highlands embrace a greater amount of them than any mountainous region in Europe.

I passed the night in a village, the name of which I have forgotten. The weather was tolerably genial in the afternoon, but towards evening the rain began to descend, and I crept into the wretched khan, in which several Turks and Armenians, accompanying a caravan from Erzeroum, passed the night with me. The following morning, as I was causing my luggage to be strapped on the horses, my umbrella was missing. I entertained, perhaps, an unjust suspicion of the Turkish caravanschik, although he protested his innocence by the beard of the Prophet.

It is only fair to add that, during my protracted residence in the East, this was the only occasion that I had to complain of a theft in a Turkish house. Occurrences of this nature were frequent subsequently among the Koords and Persians, but it never happened again in Turkish quarters.

We proceeded at daybreak, with fresh horses, and after a ride of three hours, we attained the highest ridge of the mountain chain. The brushwood and fir-trees, which had richly clothed the lower slopes of the ridge, disappeared near the summit. The sombre pines, that reach the extreme limit of vegetation, are covered with long lichens, forming a crypto-gamic vesture, protecting them like the winter clothing of certain animals, against the temperature. I have observed the same phenomenon among the High Alps of the Upper Engadin and St. Gothard. The elevation where the woods ceased was called, Sehana, by my Turkish guide. It is a singular fact, that a thousand feet above the sub-alpine region, and the limit of forest growth, single fir-trees of proud and taper forms, are scattered in different directions, and attain a height of twenty feet. A similar feature may be sometimes perceived in Switzerland, but I never saw single trees in the Alps, so high above the usual limit of vegetation.

Sehana has a striking resemblance to the country about Dilischan, in Russian Armenia, but the mountains have nobler and more picturesque forms in this district of Colchis,

there is a greater abundance of Alpine torrents, and the voice of many waters is more sonorous and melodious. Cascades were numerous, though not of remarkable beauty, nor to be compared with the waterfalls of the Hasli and other Swiss valleys.

Kiostera-sou was the name of the turbulent mountain stream which thunders down the narrow pass of Sehana. We crossed, during our ride this day, three solidly-constructed bridges, each consisting of a single lofty arch. The green mountain slopes over which we passed, and which were decorated with a rich and splendid growth of Alpine flowers, afforded beautiful perspectives of glens, plateaux, and terraces, mingled in picturesque profusion, whilst the eye plunged into the woody ravines at our feet.

We frequently met small caravans, consisting of horses and mules, returning from Tabris to Erzeroum. Most of the animals were slightly laden, and some had no burthen whatever. The importation of European goods into Persia is much more profitable than the returns yielded by that country. Most of the caravans were Armenian, and the largest did not reckon more

than a hundred horses. When I expressed my surprise at their venturing in such small bodies, and with such costly merchandize, in this wild district, I was informed that there is no danger between Trebizond and Erzeroum. The Turks and Armenians of this district are of a peaceful disposition, and the Lasians are only formidable in their own territory. Nor are Koordish robbers encountered on this side of the table-land of Erzeroum, and frequent attacks of Koordish banditti are confined to the road between Hasan-Kaleh and the Persian frontier. Hence, the small caravans make a practice of assembling at Erzeroum, where they unite in larger bodies, generally comprising three or four hundred horses, and prosecute their journey to Tabris under the protection of a Turkish cawass. My informants added that, since the Pachas had put in force a more vigorous repressive system, plundering expeditions on a large scale had become much less frequent, and there was greater risk from the nocturnal pilfering and thefts of solitary Koords, than from the attacks of large hordes.

The weather was unpropitious, and the rain descended in torrents, and almost without

intermission. The ground was completely sodden, and our narrow mountain path was slippery and dangerous. I have never passed such awkward places in the Alps, without excepting the Meyenwand, in the Canton of Valais, and other giddy precipices, requiring a very steady head. Nevertheless, Eastern travellers do not quit the saddle, even at the most dangerous places, when the path is only two feet in width, leading over a smooth, slippery surface of rock, inclining towards the dizzy precipice under your very feet. They confide in the sturdy legs, as well as in the experience and sagacity of their horses. Indeed, accidents are said to occur much less frequently than might have been anticipated, from the dangerous character of these caravan roads. The worse season for travelling, is during the thaw, which occurs in April and May.

I myself made and witnessed some personal experiences on this and the following day, which did not completely harmonize with the tranquillizing assertions of my Turkish guide. Before we reached Sehana, I saw a mule roll down the declivity, with its load, making a terrific clatter. Fortunately, the poor beast

escaped with a few bruises. A more serious accident befel a Turkish *employé*, who had associated himself with our party. His horse slid over a slippery rock, fell, and remained lying on the spot. Half the body of the Turk was imprisoned under the horse, and the remaining portion of his person was hanging suspended over the precipice, whose fearful abyss yawned ready to receive him. I had myself passed this dangerous spot only a minute before I heard the noise of the fall, and saw the Turk beneath me, in this awful situation. The horse lay with the saddle turned towards the precipice, and I could not avoid the anticipation that at the first attempt which it made to stand up, both the steed and its rider would roll into the abyss. But the instinct of the beast saved them both. The sagacious horse remained motionless, staring down the precipice, with foaming nostrils and flapping ears. The Turk was equally immovable; he saw his danger, and did not even dare to cry out, for fear of alarming the horse. Nor could we venture to approach him, without taking the greatest precaution. Whilst the Pole and myself alighted and approached him from above, the

Turk's companions had already seized the bridle, and the coat-tails of the rider; and man and beast were presently safely raised on their six legs again.

We passed the second night in the village of Sehana. Soaked to the skin, I was not in the most amiable of tempers. Happily a cheerful fire was awaiting the arrival of guests in the little Turkish coffee-house. The best place was immediately assigned to me, my clothes were dried, and I was handed an excellent cup of coffee, equalling the most fragrant produce of a Stamboul café. The exhilarating effect of this grateful beverage, coupled with the rays of the sun, which broke through the clouds, soon restored my spirits, and made way for a most agreeable mood, which was heightened by the melodious music of a mountain torrent that dashed down the rocks, close to our quarters.

From Trebizond to Sehana, the scenery is among the most magnificent that I have ever beheld. The landscapes are, perhaps, less majestic than the view of the silvery peaks of the Caucasus, from the Terek steppe, possibly also less wildly romantic, and less exuberant in sublime glaciers and foaming cascades, than

some parts of the Swiss and Savoy Alps, yet they are almost more picturesque and enchanting than these favoured spots. Amongst the Swiss landscapes, the Bödeli, near Interlaken and the north side of the Lake of Lucerne, are the only scenes that have a decided superiority over the Colchian uplands. The Trebizond road, as far as this point, leads you almost incessantly through passes of varying width. The slopes on either hand were decorated with forests, groups of trees, a splendid carpet of Alpine flowers, as you ascended higher, scattered cottages and Alpine huts, and, in short, all the charming accompaniments of spring in Colchis. The Tschebislik, which flows through these passes, is at this season a furious foaming torrent, rushing over the rocks in numerous cascades.

The following day, I rested some hours at the village of Actasö, on the banks of the Gumysch-Haneh-sou, a fine broad stream. The houses in this part of the country, are crowned with terraces of stone and mortar, instead of having the steep slated roofs of the Colchian villages. A few ruins which were visible on the right bank, were ascribed by our Turkish cawass, to the Genoese, but the remains

appeared too dilapidated to admit of our distinguishing architectural details. The banks of the stream are clothed in many places with beautiful groups of elm trees, willows, silver poplars, walnut, and mulberry trees, as well as gardens. Every patch of ground that admits of culture, even in the steepest declivities, is ingeniously used in this highland district. The meadows and pastures are not so rich as those in the Alpine valleys of Switzerland, but the corn-fields and gardens are more productive.

The town of Gumysch-Haneh, which we reached at an early hour, is singularly situated, being inclosed in a basin by bare granite rocks. The houses are grouped in the form of an amphitheatre, on the declivity of the mountain, which is so steep, that we were not able to reach the higher streets without dismounting, and leading our steeds up by the bridle. Even under these circumstances, the poor beasts found it very difficult to reach our night-quarters. The houses of the town are built of stone and mud, and present a dirty and miserable appearance. I sent my Firman to the Turkish commandant, who assigned me quarters in the house of a Greek, in tolerably

easy circumstances. Being considerably fatigued, I deferred my inspection of the town, which appears to contain nothing worthy of note. The silver and lead mines situated three miles from Gumysch-Haneh, are however, of some celebrity. The working of these mines, is said to be rather profitable to the Turkish government, though they are badly managed. The more opulent inhabitants of Gumysch-Haneh have beautiful fruit gardens, which are situated near the banks of the river.

Whilst my Pole was preparing the pilaff, my Greek host brought me a tschibouk and coffee. After indulging in my frugal repast, and as we lay stretched on the divan, smoking and comfortably fatigued, I begged the Pole to relate to us the history of his escape from Georgia, and his captivity among the Lasians. He made no difficulties, and began by describing his adventures during the Polish revolution. John Saremba differed from his countrymen, by a greater straightforwardness of character and freedom from all ostentation and bombast. He spoke Turkish fluently, and conversed with me generally in Italian. The following narrative embodies the substance of his adventures :

" I am neither a nobleman nor a peasant, but I belong to the burgher class, which is not very numerous in Poland. My father was a glazier of Warsaw, and I learned his trade, but on the outbreak of the Polish revolution in 1830, I entered the army as volunteer, was present at the battles of Grochow, Praga, Ignie, and Ostrolenka, and escaped without a wound or promotion. Most Poles will inform you that they were officers at that time. This is the practice with my countrymen; but I admit candidly, that I never became even a non-commissioned officer. These appointments were commonly bestowed on old soldiers, and it was indispensable to be either a nobleman or a foreigner, in order to obtain a commission. After the fall of Warsaw, my regiment fell back on the Prussian territory, but our hopes that the King of Prussia would grant us a passage to France or America, were disappointed. After being disarmed and retained for a few weeks, we were forced to return to Poland, and on our arrival there, we were distributed amongst a number of Russian regiments, some of us being sent into the heart of Muscovy, and others draughted to the Caucasus. The latter destina-

tion fell to my lot, I was placed in a Russian regiment on the Caucasian line, which after many changes, was ultimately quartered at the camp of Manglis, in the vicinity of Tiflis.

"There were sixteen Poles, besides myself, in my company, of whom seven had taken part in the revolutionary war. The remainder were conscripts, one of whom was married. All Poles must admit that the Russian officers, treat them rather less harshly than the genuine Russians. This does not result from any peculiar sympathy for Poland, but from a certain compassion for people who are more cultivated than Russian peasants, and especially for those who have been condemned to the dreadful lot of military service in Russia, on account of political offences. The Russian officers, do not share the unrelenting hatred of the Czar, in this matter. Most of the Poles are moreover, more dexterous, than the great Russians, many of them being natives of towns, and as they learn tactics much quicker than the Muscovites, they would probably soon engross all the non-commissioned officers' posts, if the Russian colonels were not interfered with by the Emperor. Still our mode of life was hard

enough, and though we had a tolerably easy commandant, he could not always prevent the severity and arrogance of his subordinates. Even when a Russian private does not regret his home, the bad fare, barbarous flogging, and vexatious discipline must always make the service irksome. During our intervals of leisure, we Poles used often to sit down in the thickets behind the camp of Manglis, and sing our national songs, or talk of our homes, of the past, and of our prospects, and how often did we all weep aloud as we thought of our bitter exile, in this wild country ; I admit that such exhibitions would have been very prejudicial to us, but we concealed them carefully from our officers.

“ We devised many plans of flight to Turkey, but we were deterred from taking any resolution, owing to our ignorance of the country. Meanwhile, we spared no pains to learn the Tartar idiom, and to acquire a knowledge of the road to Turkey and Persia, from the natives. One of our comrades assisted a neighbouring Tartar, gratis, in his agricultural pursuits, to win his friendship, and obtain from him, information respecting the country. The Tartar soon

detected his plan, and offered to assist us in effecting our escape. Flight to Persia would have been easier, but the Tartar being a zealous Sunnite would not hear of our seeking refuge among the heretical adherents of Ali. He advised us to escape to Lasistan, which would be more feasible than flight to Turkish Armenia. But the Pole was obliged to promise our conversion to Islam, as soon as we had crossed the Russian border. The Tartar, thereupon showed him the exact direction to follow, imparted to him the names of all the mountains and rivers that we should be obliged to cross, and those of all villages, which we should have to creep by. In cases of the most urgent perplexity, he recommended us to invoke the hospitality of the nearest Mollah, to confide our secret to him, and never to forget that we should become good Moslems, over the border.

"After we had finally resolved to desert, we passed three months in preparing for the attempt. Notwithstanding the scarcity of our pay, and the inferior quality of our rations, we laid by a store for future exigencies, and tried to insure ourselves to hunger. Some of us had been mechanics, and gained a few kopecks daily,

by doing some work ; I, for instance, worked for some Russian officers, as glazier. Our savings were thrown into a common stock. The summer passed away, the birds of passage assembled, and swept away in large flights over the hills of Manglis, and as they sailed through the air, we looked enviously after them, for we lacked their wings, and their knowledge of the way.

" We were, several times, undecided whether we should adhere to our plan. Some Malo-Russian deserters, sick of the service, and of barrack life, had been caught in the attempt to escape to the Lesghians, and brought back to the camp by the Cossacks. Each deserter was condemned to run the gauntlet three times, between a row of a thousand men, and we ourselves were ordered to join in thrashing these poor fellows to death. But though the sight of this punishment was enough to shake our resolution, hope and the instinct of freedom prevailed. We fixed the day of our flight. Only one Pole of our company, who had married the widow of a Cossack, and had a child by her, abstained from our plan, and remained behind. We mustered at dusk, with knapsack and loaded firelocks, in an appointed part of

the wood. There, we all fell on our knees, and prayed God and the Virgin Mary, that they would bless our enterprise, and grant us their protection and favour. After this, we shook hands, and swore to defend ourselves to the last extremity, and rather to kill ourselves than to suffer the Russians to kidnap us, and flog us to death.

" Our party consisted of fourteen men, some of whom had suffered from fever, whilst others had been reduced by the wretched barrack fare. But the burning love of freedom, and fear of the fate that awaited us, in the event of our failure, gave wings and vigour to our legs. We marched on for thirteen consecutive nights. During the day, we concealed ourselves in the woods, but in the evening we ventured out of cover, and even in the vicinity of the roads. When we had consumed the provisions that we had stored in our knapsacks, we were reduced to wild berries and half-raw game. Happily there was no lack of deer in the woods. In the evening we dispersed in chase of them, but we only ventured to fire close at hand, in order not to waste our ammunition, or betray our

hiding place to the kreposts. For the same reason, we did not venture to kindle a fire at night, and we preferred to freeze and eat our game raw, rather than run the risk of discovery.

"After wandering thirteen nights through the woods, we had arrived near the river Arpatschais, without clearly knowing where we were. From the bare and lofty summits where we were encamped, we beheld the houses of a large town, at a great distance. Ignorant of the topography, unprovided with a compass, avoiding all intercourse with the natives, we wandered at random over these mountains, without knowing clearly what road to take in order to reach the border.

"The chase had been unprofitable during the last few days. The torment of hunger added to our exhaustion and to our exposure to the cold. We saw a herd of wild goats browsing on the cliffs, but our attempts to secure any of them were fruitless. They skipped over the snow fields with indescribable agility, and we wasted a whole day in our unprofitable endeavour to catch some of them. The last morsel of venison, and the last bit

of hard ration bread was devoured. The sharp mountain air and our exhausting marches increased the keenness of our hunger. We were almost reduced to despair, and resolved at length, to try our luck, and approach the first village. We remembered our oath, to die rather than surrender to the Russians, return to Manglis, and get flogged to death by our comrades.

"The minaret of a Tartar mosque appeared tapering over the highest verge of the woody region. We approached it cautiously in the evening twilight, and met two Tartars, who were cutting brushwood. These 'people informed us that we were 30 versts (20 miles) from the town of Gumri, where the Russians were building a large fortress. They added, that the frontier was only distant a short day's journey from us, and that the blue river which we had seen from the mountain top, was actually the Arpatschai, forming the boundary of Turkey. We disclosed our project without disguise to the Tartars, because they could scarcely mistake us for Russian soldiers, with our tattered clothes, and wild and hungry looks; indeed they had already detected

who we were. Recollecting the exhortation of the old Tartar at Manglis, we told these people that it was our firm determination to become good Moslems, when we reached Turkish ground. We conjured them by Allah and the Prophet, to send us some provisions from the village, as they advised us, by their own accord, not to enter the place. According to their statement, a Cossack post was close at hand, and they assured us that the banks of the Arpatschai were so carefully guarded by Russian pickets, that we had a poor chance of getting across.

"The Tartars departed, walking with hasty steps to the village, but one of our party, who knew the Tartar idiom familiarly, crept through the bushes to discover if they were honest people, and if we could trust them. The Tartars, however, observed the strictest silence on their way home, and returned in an hour, with three other men, one of whom wore a white turban. As they passed close to the bush where our comrade lay concealed, he heard them engaged in animated conversation. He crawled after them cau-

tiously, and gathered enough from their colloquy, to discover that they were divided in opinion respecting what they should do with us. One of them, whom we afterwards ascertained to have served in the Oriental Life-Guards of Prince Paskiewitsch at Warsaw, voted that they should inform the Cossacks forthwith of our hiding place. But the man, in the white turban, strove to tranquillize him, and wished first to speak to us.

"The Tartars met us at the appointed place. The man with the white turban was a Mollah, and a fine old man with an honest countenance. After we had communicated our sorrows and projects openly to him, he fell into a long and deep reverie. Meanwhile one of the others, to our great surprize, addressed us in broken Polish, and informed us that he had been in Warsaw. We were so delighted at this, that we were ready to embrace the Mohammedan, but our comrade who had acted as scout, had meanwhile come up, and seized the Tartar who spoke Polish, furiously by the beard, reproaching him for his treachery, and threatening to kill him. The old Mollah now interfered, and promised us aid and protection

if we were seriously disposed to fly to Turkey, and accept Islam. We vowed that such was our intention, though we secretly prayed to our God and to the Virgin, that they would pardon us this necessary equivocation, for we wished to escape from the infernal service of Russia, without proving unfaithful to our religion.

"Before the Mollah left us, we required him to swear by his beard, and by the prophet, that he would not betray us, and we required the other Tartars to take the same oath. We wished to retain the former Guards' man as a hostage, but the Mollah begged us not to do this, and to trust to his word, adding that he would answer for the man's silence. Our most pressing want was for provisions, unfortunately the Tartars had come empty handed, and the pangs of hunger almost drove us to go with them into the village. But the Mollah cautioned us against this, by remarking that some Armenian families dwelt there, who would certainly betray us to the Russians. We suffered them to depart, and remained in suspense between fear and hope. The Mollah

had given us the parting advice, to watch during the night, as it was possible that we might have been discovered by others who would betray us to the Muscovites.

"We passed two anxious hours. Night had closed in, and the silence was only occasionally broken by the barking of the village dogs. As the village was not far distant, and the Mollah had distinctly promised to send us provisions immediately, our suspicions returned, and we began to upbraid each other for having confided in the oaths of the Tartars, without retaining the Mollah and Guardsman, as hostages.

"We seized our firelocks, and stood prepared for action, nor was our anxiety unfounded. We shortly heard the neighing of horses and distant voices. Those of our comrades, whose limbs had retained the greatest vigour, crept into the bush as scouts, and returned with the alarming intelligence, that they had distinctly heard Russian pieces. Meanwhile, the noise died away, and all became as still as the grave, the very watch dogs appearing buried in sleep.

"Even before it was dawn, one of our old

friends the Tartars came, accompanied by some strange faces. They brought us a large dish with rice, and a roasted lamb, besides bread and fruit. He informed us that our position had been betrayed to the Russians by an Armenian. The Cossack captain had summoned the Mollah to appear, and threatened him, but obtained no disclosures from him. As the Cossacks were not accurately informed respecting our lurking place, one of the Tartars had led them on a wrong scent, in order to secure our safety. He added, that as the Tartars looked upon us as fellow-believers, not one of those would betray us, unless it were perhaps the Guardsman, who was a sot, a spendthrift and an object of general contempt in the village.

“When we had appeased our hunger, our courage rose with the recruital of our strength, and we determined to march on at once. The Tartars advised us not to cross over the Arpa-tschai, because it was too carefully guarded by the Russians, suggesting that we should proceed more to the northward, passing over the mountains by Akhalzik, where it would be easier for

us to reach the Turkish border. We then expressed our thanks, and took leave of these people, but scarcely had the first rays of the rising sun appeared, ere we heard the distant hurrah of the Cossacks, who, accompanied by a large body of Tartars, were intercepting our road to the valley. We fell back into the bush, and fired at the first group of troopers who attempted to charge into the thicket. Two Cossacks and one Tartar emptied their saddles, and the remainder took flight. After this successful encounter, we retired to the highest ridge again, from which we had descended, nor did we linger to examine the fallen. But a single rider soon appeared, waving a green bough, and beckoning to us to come down, and we recognized that he was one of the Tartars, who had furnished us with provisions. He informed us that the Mollah was again at the old place in the wood, and that he wished to speak to us. He added, that we need be under no farther apprehension with regard to the Cossacks, for as they considered that we mustered twice as strong as the reality, they had fallen back to their post and sent to Gumri for reinforcements, which would arrive by the evening.

" As we expressed some suspicions, the Tartar offered to remain as hostage, and I went with three of my comrades to the appointed place. The remainder stayed behind and kept the Tartar in custody. We found that the Mollah was at the place with two of the people, who had accompanied him the previous evening, and we now learned to our astonishment, that the Tartar whom we had shot, was the old Guardsman of Paskiewitsch, who had addressed us in Polish. Such a coincidence appeared to us the judgment of God, for the man, notwithstanding his oath, had betrayed our hiding-place to the Russians, who were already aware of our being in the vicinity. The remaining male inhabitants of the village had been forcibly levied, and hurried off to strengthen the Cossacks, but they had all gladly taken advantage of our volley, to run away. We owed our safety to a stratagem of the Mollah, who persuaded the captain of the Cossacks to divide his detachment into two bodies, of which, one was led astray designedly. Our confidence in the old priest had not been misplaced. He reminded us of our promise to pass over to Islam, on Turkish ground, he gave us likewise, the advice to proceed by the

mountains of Akhalzik, and he dismissed us with his blessing, after giving us minute directions respecting the road, and our behaviour in case we fell into the hands of the Pacha of Kars, who was in the Russian interest, and might hand us over to the Muscovites. We hastened back to our party, related what the old man had told us, released the Tartar, and wandered the whole day over the rugged ridge. The following morning we succeeded in shooting a goat, but as there was not a stick of fuel on these bare mountains, we were obliged to eat it raw.

"After reposing for a few hours, we continued our wanderings in the direction that had been pointed out to us. It was bitterly cold, the snow fell in large flakes, and a cutting wind blew in our faces. Towards evening, we perceived a small fire, and guided by its glare, we arrived at some huts inhabited by poor Russian settlers, consisting of heretical Duchoborzi, who had been condemned to exile in this rugged district. They appeared honest and kind-hearted people, who used cow's dung for fuel, and who gave us the best that they had. With tears in their eyes, they related the sufferings and oppression they

endured at the hand of the Russians, and how they had been robbed of their property, and driven from their homes. The majority of them had fallen victims to the hardships of the journey and the privations of a first settlement. Their different colonies were scattered over the mountains, and they added that German settlements were near, but warned us against them, and we determined to make a circuit round the German village. On the following night, when we proposed to cross the border, we gave our last kopecks to these Duchoborzi, as we were perfectly aware that Russian coin would not pass in Turkey. The good people filled our flasks with vodka, and took leave of us with the kindest wishes.

"The following day, the mountain summits were veiled with a thick mist, we could hardly see ten paces before us, and it was very dangerous to descend the precipitous declivities, and ravines, through which the rain-water poured in large streams. On the other hand, we hoped to pass the Russian border, here, undetected, because it had no defined boundary, being formed by the mountain chain. But the frontier posts had received latterly considerable reinforcements,

not only to repress the plague and smuggling, but also to prevent desertion. We had been informed that we should be out of all danger on the opposite slope of the mountains, because no Cossack posts extend over the ridge, and the Turkish border began on the other side. We were already indulging in unrestrained delight at having left the Russian territory, turned our backs on captivity, and evaded all dangers.

" But who can express our terror, when the mist cleared up, as we were in the middle of the valley, and we saw before us a Cossack post, close at hand. It was too late to fall back, so marching up in rank and file, we approached the station with measured tread. This stratagem succeeded. The Cossack sentry mistook us for a Russian patrol. We surrounded the house, took prisoners the sentinel and seven half-drunk Cossacks, and learnt from them that we had not missed our way to the border, notwithstanding the fog. The detachment occupying this post, consisted of thirty men ; but this very day, twenty-two had started under a sub-officer, to patrol the road as far as a neighbouring post. Intelligence of our desertion

had arrived from Gumri, with directions that the Cossacks of the frontier posts, should be strengthened with a detachment of infantry. The sentry had taken us for one of these expected detachments. We had good cause to congratulate ourselves on the result of our adventures. We found refreshments in the kitchen of the Cossacks, and filled our knapsacks with the residue, we also took their horses with us, and at their own request tied the hands and feet of the men, for as they had now become sober, they were terrified at their responsibility in having suffered us to secure the post, unresisted. Their minds were filled with alarm at the terrible punishment which probably awaited them, for although the fog, and our superiority in number were some excuse, they were certain to receive a severe flogging. At their request, we closed the door of the station, and hurried to the mountains with our booty, hoping to reach our destination, without farther accidents.

“At the first Turkish post, we halted, related our story and expressed our wish to be transported to Constantinople. We were obliged to give up our arms, and our arrival was

announced the same day, to the Pacha of Kars. The Turkish commandant of the post, was the son of a Lasian Derebey, who tried to prevail on us to fly into the mountains, and invoke the protection of one of the chieftains, dependant on the Pacha of Trebizond. But we did not confide in his statements, and wished to be removed to Kars. Meanwhile, we discovered that the Russian commandant of Gumri, had sent a threatening message to the Pacha of Kars, demanding our extradition. Four days passed in anxious suspense. Couriers were flying backwards and forwards, between Kars and Gumri. At length, we were informed that we must become Moslems, to avoid extradition. The Lasian Derebey, now renewed his proposal, which we accepted, and we were forwarded by night, under escort, into the mountains.

"As we advanced, my companions were gradually separated from each other, and from me, and when we remonstrated, we were informed that it was essential for our security. On the third morning all my comrades had vanished, I, at length, lost all courage and sobbing aloud, cursed my unhappy lot.

"I soon discovered that the treacherous Beg,

had sold us to some Lasian slave-traders, and I was taken by them to a valley in the district of Adschara. Here I became the slave of a hard master, and my privations and sufferings brought on a fever, which endangered my life. Ali Beg, my master, was afraid of losing me, and consented to sell me to a Turkish slave-dealer, my request being supported by his young wife, who seemed to pity me. After enduring many hardships in Adschara, I was forwarded to Riseh, and thence to Trebizond. But here I was exposed to the risk of a still greater misfortune, because the slave-dealer, intentionally or ignorantly, brought me to the house of the Russian instead of the French Consul.

“ Happily, I escaped to the latter, who was at that time, a most kind-hearted man, and he took me under the protection of France, sent me to Galatz, where I laboured at my trade, married a Greek woman, and became the father of two children, who will be delighted if I save up some money, and bring them some pretty things from Persia. My trade is not very profitable, but I have received pecuniary aid from Count Zamoyski and Prince Czartoryski, notwithstanding the large colony of Poles

claiming charity. It is singular that I have never heard anything of my fourteen comrades, and you may infer the probable fate of most deserters in the Caucasus. For my part, I would gladly give the last morsel of bread to secure their freedom, or learn their fate."

Such was the unvarnished tale of John Saremba, and at its conclusion, a deep shade of melancholy settled on his features, as he reflected on the dismal fate of his scattered countrymen, whilst large tears fell fast on his bushy moustaches, as he wished me good-night, after filling and handing me my tschibouk and my last cup of coffee.

We continued our journey on the 29th of May, and passing through Barburt, reached Erzeroum on the 1st of June. As this road has been so frequently traversed and described by recent travellers, we shall avoid the repetition of details which may be found elsewhere, especially as this part of our journey was not marked by any unusual adventure, though I encountered an accident that might have proved serious, by the fall of my horse, the day before our arrival at Erzeroum. Happily my injuries were confined to a few bruises, and we reached in safety

the capital of Armenia, where I met with a hospitable and friendly reception at the different European Consulates, and at the residence of Colonel (now General) Williams, who was at that time appointed Commissioner, to determine the Turco-Persian border, with joint Commissioners appointed by Russia, Persia and Turkey.

I shall avoid all farther notice of this boundary question, and of Erzeroum and its precincts, these matters having been ably dealt with in Mr. Curzon's "Armenia," and having formed my arrangements to accompany a caravan to Tabris, I shall request the reader to accompany me to Koordistan and the Persian border.

END OF VOL. II.

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TRAVELS IN PERSIA,

GEORGIA AND KOORDISTAN;

WITH

SKETCHES OF THE COSSACKS AND THE CAUCASUS.

FROM THE GERMAN OF

DR. MORITZ WAGNER.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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CHAPTER III.

Journey over the Turco-Persian Plateau—The Koords—Kara-gös—Caravan Life and Habits of the Horses—Wolves—Panthers and Tigers—Vultures—Koordish Thieves—Town and Table Land of Hassan-Kaleh—Koordish Dwellings—Observations on the Koords—Topra-Kaleh—Convent of Utsch-Kilissa—Observations on the Armenian Clergy—Mount Ararat—Koordish Banditti—Bajasid.

THE journey across the Armenian highlands to Persia, is commonly made in caravans or with post-horses, occasionally in company with a government Tartar. The latter travels *en courier*, changes horses every four or five hours, rides at the usual Eastern pace, galloping all the stage, never rests more than one hour, rides many a horse to death, and makes the journey from Erzeroum to Tabris, comprising

250 miles, in the marvellously short space of two days and a half. Englishmen, with their usual resolution, have frequently attempted the journey in this fashion. But they have subsequently admitted that they would prefer fox-hunting for a month without intermission, together with incessant steeple-chases and boxing matches, to a repetition of this pleasure trip, *à la Tartare*.

The Turkish post has no resemblance to the European, save in the name. There are neither post-masters, post-houses nor postillions in Turkey, in the proper acceptation of those terms. But a firman of the Padischah or Pacha, secures everywhere a supply of horses and a driver. The charges are moderate, but it is not prudent to make the journey from Erzeroum to the Persian frontier, without a Turkish cawass, who charges 500 Turkish piastres for the favour of his company. Even then the undertaking is not free from danger.

Almost all the passes of the Armenian highlands, are the lurking places of Koordish robbers, whose lynx eyes are ever on the look-out for unwary and unguarded wanderers.

The Koords who unite the character of herdsmen and thieves, and who are encamped or roam over the highest summits, plateaux and valleys with their flocks, are always ready to raise their wolf-like schream, to poise their long bamboo lance, and pounce upon travellers and caravans as often as the resistance is not likely to be too determined, and the booty is sufficiently attractive. It is true, that the Koords have become much more peaceful, tame and honest, since the Pachas have employed the Nizam to reduce the district to order. But the Koords are still occasionally attacked by fits of their old distemper, and their nomadic habits facilitate their predatory pursuits. If the frontier Pachas of Kars or Bajasid, &c. march against the Koords with the Nizam, to wrest their unlawful gains from them, and to chastise them, the robbers fly over the Persian border, send a few presents to the Sardar of Tabris, and then they commonly linger on the table lands of Aserbeidschan, with their flocks and herds, till repeated complaints of Koordish robberies, reach the Persian authorities of Tabris, Choi

or Urmia. Threatened anew, the nomadic hordes fly over the wild declivities of the Agri-Dagh to the Russian territory, and by presenting the commandant of the border Cossacks with some beautiful horses, obtain permission to pitch their tents on the pastures of Ararat. If complaints reach the Russian Natschalnik at Erivan, relating to the occasional exercise of their predatory habits, the horde can always seek a last refuge in the highlands of Koordistan, and escape the clutches of the Turkish Nizam, in its fastnesses, where they secure the protection of some powerful Koordish chief, by appropriate bribes.

Not long previous to my departure from Erzeroum, Mr. Abbot, English Consul at Teheran had been stripped to the shirt, together with his escort, by Koordish robbers. Mr. Abbot was a man of great personal courage, but his unavailing and unseasonable attempts to secure his dignity and independance, led to this tragi-comical catastrophe. The representative of the great British Empire, whose sceptre holds sway over the ocean and over half the earth, was subjected to the same

indignities here, as his countrymen in Bokhara, though not terminating so fatally. Yet there was no sufficient redress in either case.

Mr. Abbot was attacked near Diadin. He pointed a pistol, which luckily missed fire, at the first Koord who charged him, lance in rest. His own death must have paid for the blood of the Koord, if he had slain him. Two heavy pokes with the lance, which happily pierced his burka instead of his skin, unsaddled the doughty Briton, whose Oriental suite being totally deficient in his pluck, laid down their arms without farther resistance, terrified at the looks and schreams of the Koords, who showed themselves magnanimous after their fashion. For though they carried off horses, luggage and the very clothes from the backs of their victims, they left them their lives. And though Mr. Abbot had been regaled with a volley of lance-blows and whip-lashes, this was regarded as a requital for the attempted pistol shot. No injury was inflicted on his Armenian servants, who had politely laid down their arms. Naked as Adam before the Fall, the party set forth on their wander-

ings amidst the wild laughter of the Koords, and at the first village they reached, they were scantily provided with clothes by its Armenian inhabitants. Consul Brandt made a great disturbance about the affair, and the Pacha was obliged to pay a pecuniary compensation. But the Koords retired to their inaccessible fastnesses, where they mocked at the wrath, and threats of the British Consul and the Turkish Pacha.

The safest, cheapest, and pleasantest mode of travelling to Persia, is by great trading caravans, which leave Erzeroum almost every week for Tabris, conveying thither British cotton, and manufactures with merchandize from the Leipzig Fair, and from Nuremburg. The smallest of the caravans generally consist of from two to three hundred, the largest of nine hundred horses. Mules are seldom employed, and I only saw camels on one occasion between Salmas and Choi, but they did not pass the Turkish frontier. Every four horses have on the average, one driver, who goes on foot, or reclines behind a pack-saddle, and is commonly armed with a firelock, dagger, or sword. If the caravan convey merchandize of peculiar value, the

Pacha usually provides it with a cawass, who rides at the head of the column, carrying a long lance with a horse's tail attached to it, answering as a warning to the Koords, and a protection to the caravan, thus placed under the immediate care of the Pacha of Erzeroum. The strength of the caravan is, however, a more effectual safeguard, than the presence of the cawass. For, though the Armenians are generally tame and cowardly people, they defend their property with the fury of a lioness guarding her whelps, and as the bands of Koords, on this road, are commonly much inferior in numbers, caravan journeys are attended with comparative security. On the other hand, the strongest caravan is unable to guard against the pilfering of the Koords during the night; and we witnessed some amusing instances of their cleverness in this art.

The caravan with which I travelled to Persia, through Hassan-Kaleh and Diadin, was under the guidance of a wealthy Armenian named Kara-gös, *i. e.* black eye. His appellation was appropriate, for the first objects that struck you in contemplating his short, stumpy person, were a pair of unprepossessing, slightly squinting, coal-black eyes. Later, I discovered that he

was deformed and lame. Nevertheless his ungainly exterior did not diminish his importance at Erzeroum. Though corporeal beauty, and an imposing person exert a great influence in the East, wealth has still greater weight. Kara-gös brought the Pacha of Erzeroum, annually, a beautiful horse of Turcoman or Karabagh breed, was admitted to kiss the hands of the Lord of three Tails, and gave handfuls of backs-hish to porters and seraglio servants, as he passed through the ante-chambers. These arguments were so convincing, that the giaour-dom and squint of the hunchback Raja, were lost sight of, and all his whims about the Caravan were readily granted. He bore the proud title of *Karivan-Baschi*, i. e. head of the caravan, and he expected to be treated with respect proportional to the dignity.

The caravan commanded by Kara-gös, consisted of 360 horses, of which, one half were his own property. The remainder were owned chiefly by Armenian proprietors, to whom Kara-gös confided part of his goods, which the Russian Consul had handed over to him as freight. Some of these Armenians speculated on their own account, and I made an agreement

with one of them the evening before our departure. We left Erzeroum about noon, rode over the ridge separating the table land of Erzeroum to the Eastward, from the plateau of Hassan-Kaleh, and reached the caravan at sunset, encamped in the vicinity of the little town of that name. The weather was agreeable, and the temperature most genial on these high Armenian plateaux. From Hassan-Kaleh, we proceeded onward in short day's journeys. In summer, the caravans always travel by night, they commonly march nine to twelve miles, encamp shortly after sunrise, and turn their horses in the pastures, where they leave them till two o'clock after midnight. In winter, when the horses are fed on barley, they march daily twice the distance, and pass the nights in the towns and villages. If we except the slowness of this mode of travelling (I was twenty-seven days on the road from Erzeroum to Tabris) a caravan journey has many attractions for a person who wishes to obtain more than a superficial knowledge of the country. During the daily halt, I had leisure to roam over the mountains near our bivouac, to shoot game and to make collections.

One of the most interesting features of caravan travelling, is presented by the instincts and habits of the animals forming it. Caravan cattle have the peculiarity of being stubbornly attached to their customs, of respecting the established order, of partiality for social intercourse with acquaintances and friends, whether bipeds, or quadrupeds; they are, moreover, very inhospitable, and will not tolerate the slightest familiarity on the part of strange animals. These remarks apply especially to the horses. The mules, asses, and dromedaries which you only meet in Persia, have their peculiar idiosyncracies, and require a separate description.

It would be almost impossible to preserve the necessary order, in such a crowd, and amidst the din occasioned by the mingled shouts and cries of some hundreds of men, and beasts, were it not for the docility of the caravan horses, and their respect for traditional usages. This applies especially to the tumult accompanying the halting, or starting of the caravan, from its night quarters or daily encampment. The gentle and docile character of the Oriental horses, notwithstanding their fiery spirit, is very con-

ducive to the preservation of order. They never present the vicious, spiteful temperament of the Gaucho steeds in the American Pampas, nor the stubborn wilfulness of Wallachian and Cossack horses, in the steppes of the Danube, and the Don, where the *Tabuntschik* can scarcely reduce his wild herds to order by the most vigorous exertions of his voice and *lasso*. The free and independant cattle of the steppe, with their republican principles, would never bend the neck to a pack-saddle, or the caravan discipline.

Every caravan horse has a bell attached to his neck, and its sound would betray his vagaries, if he were disposed to stroll from the line of march, and wander into the pastures or over the mountains. But attempts of this nature are confined to novices. The trained and disciplined pack-horse rarely gives cause for complaint. Scarcely has the Caravan-Baschi giving the signal for starting, two hours after midnight, ere a loud neighing, snuffling and ringing of bells, emanating from the horses, driven in from the pastures, gives intimation that they are all ready, fresh and anxious to march. On these occasions, the silence of the

night and of the bivouac, are dispelled by sights and sounds, effectually banishing sleep from the wanderer, till the last horse has received his load, and the last tent is struck. Notwithstanding the darkness, the intelligent animals manage to keep their right position, near their own master, and they always scent out the drivers who load, feed, and water them. Amidst the greatest din, and throng of shouting men, the beast stands immovable till his pack saddle and load, are placed and carefully poised on his back. This operation never consumes above a few seconds. With a shout and a swing, two men hoist the load, and cast it on the pack saddle, and scarcely has the horse perceived that it is on his back, ere he starts of his own accord, all the cattle following each other, invariably in single file. The best trained Russian regiment does not march more steadily, or keep the step and arrangement with more regularity, than these caravan horses, wherever the nature of the ground, and direction of the track allow it. If any confusion disturb the line of march, occasioned by some accident, such as the fall of a horse, or the passage of another caravan, the animal which comes

nearest to the scene of disorder halts, together with the horse behind it. The whole column remains stationary, the ringing of bells is hushed, and the quadrupeds look as riveted to the ground, as the steeds of the Quirinal, without requiring any interference on the part of their drivers. As soon as the impediment is removed, the animals move on again, of their own accord. The usual measured tread is resumed, and the bells ring out their peal again, which reverberates among the rocks and ravines of the Armenian Alps.

It is customary to place the oldest and most experienced horse at the head of a column. This leader is commonly a long-maned patriarch, who has travelled on the road many a year, has an accurate knowledge of localities, and is justly proud of his experience and equine intelligence. This sagacious animal never loses his way, he is never disturbed if a block of rock of a peculiar shape, or a skeleton lies in the path, or even if some camels, which are especial objects of dread, happen to pass by. Even when the sky is darkened with tempests, and the thunder rolls, and lightning blazes, and the rain and hail create alarm and con-

fusion among the younger animals, the veteran leader does not lose his self-possession. The example of the guiding horse re-acts favourably in tranquillizing those behind him, whereas any unsteadiness in the leader instantly passes along the file, creating disturbance and disorder in the column. The patriarchs are never at fault, even in the darkest nights, being guided by instinct, and great familiarity with the road, nor is there the least cause for anxiety, even in the thickest fog. If a river or raging torrent intercept the road, the old leader stands still, until the rider nearest at hand, discovers the shallowest ford, when the patriarch and his immediate followers follow in his wake, and are succeeded by the most inured horses, and ultimately by the novices, wading or swimming through the stream. It cannot be concealed that these exploits are not invariably unattended with danger. After a great thaw or a heavy rain, the torrents occasionally acquire tremendous power and dimensions, and sweep away the struggling animals in their current. Nevertheless they are generally preserved by their instinct and sagacity.

It is very entertaining to meet a strange

caravan coming from the opposite direction ; in the silence of the night, you generally hear the sound of its bells at a considerable distance. Some of the horsemen who act as vanguard to the caravan, protecting it from the onslaught of Koords and wolves, by firing off their pieces and resisting the attack, ride ahead in the darkness or the dawn, to reconnoitre, if possible, the approaching column. If the people of the approaching caravan are friends, acquaintances, or, at all events, fellow believers, mutual greetings are exchanged, and both parties engage in animated conversation. The Caravan-Baschis, being men of greater consequence, exchange a formal salutation, and compare notes respecting the novelties, state of trade, or political occurrences at Trebizond and Tabris. Not unfrequently rapid bargains are concluded, provisions are supplied, and horses are purchased. But if the escort of the respective caravans are of different nations and creeds, it is rarely that any commercial intercourse takes place between them. They scarcely condescend to give each other a passing salam ; and generally prefer to pass each other in silence. The Shiites* of the

* Sectaries of Ali.

Tartar race possess a good share of Turkish haughtiness and fanaticism, and though the Armenians are generally easy, and peaceable people, their excessive obsequiousness has been considerably diminished since the last Russian war. The Armenian Caravan-Baschi is perfectly conscious of the influence resulting from his wealth, and the protection of the European Consuls. On the other hand, the former superciliousness of the Moslems, towards the Christian Rajas, especially in Anatolia, has been greatly modified. The relative position of Christians and Mahomedans in Persia, though still far from amicable, has become tolerable, and if the truth must be told, this state of things has resulted from the victorious sword of Paskiewitsch, who broke the pride of the Persians, probably for ever.

The caravan horses are not more tolerant to strangers, than their masters. They cannot endure horses that do not belong to their peculiar clique. If two caravans happen to be encamped near each other, their respective horses, whilst grazing in the pastures, watch each other with their ears pricked up, gallop

neighing up and down, whilst their snorting nostrils, and curling manes, bespeak their pugnacious temperament. This happens, especially if stallions accompany either or both of the caravans, these animals being the peculiar objects of envy and animosity, even on the part of geldings of the opposite party. But even if there be no sexual occasion of dispute, most of the younger and fiery horses become very unmanageable, directly they see any strangers of their own species. Under the influence of this excitement, they generally resist all the authority and chastisements of their masters. At length, one of the most spirited steeds, unable any longer to keep under his desire for battle, gallops wildly to the hostile pasture, challenging his foes with the summons of his neighings. He is commonly followed by his most fiery comrades, who act as escort and seconds. A wild and warlike outburst of neighing, resounding like the blast of a spirit stirring trumpet, challenges the most valiant of the foe to the encounter. The challenge is commonly accepted, and the reply from the opposite side is as full of defiance and metal as the summons. Foaming and prancing, a long legged Turcoman

horse dashes away to encounter the fire-coloured stallion of Erzeroum, or a grey mare from Karabagh. Lashing and biting, the two antagonists engage in mortal affray, each seeking to seize the other in the flank. Neighing and foaming, their comrades dart up, on both sides, to the rescue. There is much fraternal feeling between the horses of the same caravan, and the tournament would speedily enlarge into a general battle, were it not for the shouts and curses of the drivers, who hurrying up with their whips, soon disperse the combatants.

When two caravans meet on the march, this feeling of hostile animosity to strangers is not exhibited. The horses are then under the restraint of discipline, and betray no symptoms of impatience or pugnacious propensities. The heavy laden columns pass each other peacefully, though you may occasionally hear the neighing of a stallion, amidst the clang of bells; but a few lashes, and the spur and bit keep them in effectual order. Our Turkish cawass rode a splendid young black stallion, which, being in the prime of life and in capital condition, was naturally rather lively. Being

a stranger in the herd, it was always necessary to tie him up, to preserve him from the jealousy of the other horses. Novices receive commonly a most uncourteous treatment. Kara-gös bought, occasionally, fresh horses, at the Koordish villages, and they were often very ill-treated, at first, by their companions, nor could they scarcely manage to stand their ground against the storm of blows and kicks with which they were greeted, though their own hoofs and hides were tolerably tough. It was frequently necessary to employ the lash to rescue these unhappy victims.

It occasionally happens, when caravans meet, that old acquaintances, in the respective columns, recognize each other—animals that have, perhaps, often travelled together in the same caravan, that have been born in the same stable, grown up together in the same pastures, and been subsequently exchanged, or sold, to different masters. A faithful and grateful memory appears one of the peculiar characteristics of Oriental, and especially of caravan horses. A remarkably loud neighing, emanating even from pack horses, often betrays the joyful surprize of

these poor animals, in meeting again their old playmates, who had shared bed and board, pleasure and pain, pack and pasture with them for long years.

Karapet-Bedochil had agreed to mount me on one of his youngest and best horses. It was a chesnut mare of middle size, fine shape and good action. The disposition of this animal was remarkably gentle, so long as you respected her habits. In the opposite case, she showed a very stubborn temper, and it required some time to break her into my ways and bring her to adopt my own pace, and deviate from the track of the caravan.

It is somewhat tedious to ride in the rank and file of a caravan. Accordingly, as soon as the dawn appeared, and the first beams of the sun irradiated the green mountain slopes, I used to take pleasure in riding aside to the neighbouring heights, in order to view the landscape, and gratify my eye with the picturesque appearance of the Koordish encampments, and of the caravan procession. But my mare never shared in my delight. It took much spurring to bring her to part from her comrades, even

for a few minutes. Sociability and antipathy to solitude, are among the most striking characteristics of these animals. Occasionally, I stayed behind the caravan, if I chanced to encounter some very interesting spot, offering sundry attractions to the naturalist. In such cases, I used to tie the mare to a rock, but she always looked with a longing eye after the caravan. When the last stragglers were out of sight, she used to prick her ears, so long as the ringing of bells was still audible. But when this sound had died away, she would drop her head sadly, and look with an inquiring and appealing look at her master. Though it required hard tugging to bring her to move aside or step behind, when it was my purpose to overtake the caravan, she displayed all the fire of the Oriental horse, and flew like the wind till she came within hearing of the bells. As soon as she recovered sight of her comrades, she would break out into a loud neighing.

This sociable and brotherly feeling of the Armenian horses, is a serious impediment to the plots of the Koordish thieves, who creep round the encampment by night.

Accordingly, they have devised the plan of carrying on their thievish operations, themselves mounted on old caravan horses, which they had stolen and trained for the purpose. A sling is cast round the neck of some horse that is grazing, and whilst one of the thieves holds fast the end of the rope, and draws the captured horse after him, another Koord applies the lash behind. The Armenian guards fire off their firelocks as an alarm signal, and fly after the thieves, on their best horses. If they overtake them, they try, at first, by fair words or threats, to induce the Koords to give up their prey, and they only resort to fire-arms as a last resort, because they stand in awe of Koordish blood feuds.

The attacks of wolves, in winter, are much less dreaded than the robberies and onslaughts of the Koords. The wolves are naturally much more timid and cowardly than is generally supposed, nor does anything, short of absolute famine and desperation, lead them to conquer their natural shyness of man. It occasionally happens, indeed, that a pack of hungry wolves, congregate together, break into the marching column, seize and tear to pieces some wretched

horse, before the drivers can come to the rescue. The wolves show great sagacity in selecting the weakest point of the column for their attack. But occurrences of this sort do not come to pass once in ten years, and only in the longest and severest winters. It is a most common accident, that in summer, single wolves crawl in among the grazing horses, but the wonderful instinct of the latter, generally detects the foe at once. They rally with all speed, and form a circle, their heads facing inwards, and their hind hoofs ready for action. If the wolf do not succeed at the first spring, in tearing open the throat of his victim, the case is generally hopeless, for the serried phalanx salutes the intruder with a volley of kicks, and if he do not make off quickly, he falls a victim to the bullets of the guards hurrying to the rescue. The wolf only hazards these attacks by night, for by day he is almost as cowardly as the jackal.

Caravans are in no danger from other beasts of prey, on the road from Erzeroum to Tabris. The jackals are weak and timid, and though they follow the caravans in winter, this is only for the purpose of picking up refuse. Bears are

not so frequently met with, as in the woody region towards Lasistan and Colchis, where they devour sheep and goats, but never attack horses. But there is much more danger between Tabris and Teheran, and especially to the southward, on the road to Ispahan. Here the Turcomans take the place of the Koords, and wolves are replaced by panthers. Nevertheless the number of these ravenous animals is much less considerable, and their fear of man much greater than has been represented. I subsequently spoke to caravan leaders in Persia, who had travelled on the road from Tabris to Teheran for thirty years, without being troubled by wild beasts. Others only knew of a few cases in which panthers or tigers had broken into the caravan by night, and had torn to pieces one individual of the cattle. The splendid woody region of Masenderan is the favourite resort of panthers, but it is only crossed by small caravans. In the Turcoman wilderness, in Khorasan, and on the road from Ispahan to Shiraz, solitary tigers are frequently encountered, and occasion the caravans not a little anxiety by night. The only other animals that regularly escort the

caravans, and that call for particular notice are the ravens and hawks, which devour the excrements of the horses in winter, and the flesh of the fallen steeds in summer. I saw the same white-headed vulture (*vultur fulvus*) as in Algeria, soaring at an immense height above the column, and immediately that a horse dropped dead, a dozen of these powerful birds darted down, and fastened on their prey.

The animals of the caravan, including the dogs, are on tolerably good terms with these vultures, or, at all events, suffer considerable familiarities on their part. Possibly some mysterious sympathy is at work here, and the horse is conscious that the maw of the bird will become his coffin, and the grave of the greater part of his flesh. After satisfying their hunger in the pastures, the horses would congregate together in thick array, in a hot day, and drooping their necks seek for shade under their neighbour's body, nor did they appear at all discomposed by the presence of a vulture perched on their backs, indeed they were so polite as not to stir, that they might not disturb his slumbers. I occasionally saw ravens, too, perch'd in this sociable manner on the backs of the

horses, or dromedaries. Similar partialities are observed in Africa, between the vultures and cows, ravens and pigs, whilst the silver heron and the ibis have been detected in the same sociable relations with elephants. There is only one animal that is an object of special aversion to the Armenian caravan horse, and that is the camel. Nor can the latter endure horseflesh. This antipathy is retained even in caravans, where both species of animals have been long accustomed to each other's society. Horses and camels always go separately to pasture, if they are not interfered with. Hostile demonstrations are prevented in the case of long intercourse and habit, but during my protracted stay in the East, I never knew an instance of even cool and distant friendship between these beasts.

At three o'clock in the morning, of the 18th of June, I was awoke on the Pasin table-land of the Armenian highlands, by the jingle of the bells, as the horses mustered from the pastures. It was the first night that I had passed in a caravan encampment, and being as yet unaccustomed to the tumult of this novel scene, I observed this curious picture with much interest by the first light of dawn. Kara-gös,

the Caravan-Baschi, had pitched his great tent in the centre of the camp. The bales of goods piled up in a square, formed a sort of entrenchment, serving as a protection against the attacks of the Koords. Sheltered by this bulwark, those Armenians who were provided with fire-arms had undertaken to watch. Kara-gös behaved quite like a Pacha. He strutted about, throwing back his short mis-shapen body with the utmost importance, and he was followed wherever he went by a crowd of obsequious servants, ready to execute his orders. Next to him, in consequence, were the *Kadirtschis*, or horse-owners of the caravan, who had either hired their animals to Kara-gös, or laden them on their own account. Though respectful in their demeanour to their leader, they were not so brow-beaten by him as the drivers, on whom Kara-gös discharged all the contents of his vials of wrath, if any accident befel their charge, and who being poor and dependant, were necessarily unprotected. The position and importance of the Kadirtschis depended exclusively on the number of horses owned by them. But there was one man with us, whose appearance alone created a greater effect than

all our Kadirschis and Baschi together. This was the Turkish cawass, bestowed on us by the Seraskier Kiamil Pacha, as our guard through the land of the Koords. This individual was understood to represent the dignity of the Sublime Porte, and riding at the head of the column, with lance and horse tails, gave the Koords intimation, who might have a sly lust for pilfer, that the goods were under the protection of the mighty Seraskier of Erzeroum. Notwithstanding his atheletic figure, this cawass was a very good-humoured Turk of phlegmatic character, free from all arrogance, and using his authority chiefly to support the influence of the Caravan-Baschi.

The little town of Hassan-Kaleh is situated at the northern base of a very high rock, and presents a very miserable appearance. Its walls are in ruins, and half its houses dilapidated, even the old fort on the rock presents a complete wreck; in fact the nearer you approach the Turco-Persian frontier, the greater are the signs of decay. Mineral springs gush forth from the soil in this remarkably volcanic region.

Hassan-Kaleh is reported to have been an old Genoese station, but the matter is disputed, nor

can I settle the question. Certain it is, that the principal frontier towns of Anatolia on the Persian border, are regarded as Genoese stations, some of which are even traced to Aserbeid-schan.

In its present wretched condition, Hassan-Kaleh could offer no resistance to a European force, especially as it is commanded by the neighbouring heights. The little Hassan-Kaleh river, which flows close to the town, is 5140 French feet above the sea.

The table-land of Pasin is not so broad, but almost as long as the plateau of Erzeroum. The mountain chains inclosing it to the south and north, are continuations of the ridges, which form the boundaries of the plain of Erzeroum. The Araxes which bisects the basin of Parsin, is, even at this season, a considerable river, too deep to be forded, and formerly spanned by a solid stone bridge, attributed to Darius Hystaspes, but long since mutilated and disfigured by a wooden arch in the centre.

Our caravan encamped this evening in some beautiful meadows, six miles from the Araxes. The nearest Turkish village was called Juswara, not a vestige of wood is to be seen in the whole

country, and the Armenians were obliged to use dung as fuel to boil our coffee and soup.

On the 19th of June, we reached the foot of a mountain chain, called in the map of the Russian staff, Kussah-dagh, forming the southern boundary of the Basin of Pasin, separating it from the plateau of Topra-Kaleh.

About two miles from our encampment, appeared the black tents of some Koordish nomadic families, whom I visited, armed with my fowling piece, but I found no one, save the women and children at home, as the men were away with the herds at the mountain pastures, and were not expected to return till the evening. The Koordish tents are stretched over a basket-work of reeds, which rising about two feet from the ground, form the tent poles, and admit a free current of air. They are tolerably spacious and handsomer than the tents in the *douars* of the Bedouins in Algeria. The women were remarkably ugly, and as scantily clad as the gypsy women of Southern Russia. Their ears, necks, and arms were adorned with necklaces, rings, and bracelets of bad tin and lead. They seemed astonished, but by no means frightened, on seeing me and my gun. I asked for some

jauert, (sour milk) and promised them money, but they replied that they had no provisions of any kind. On the neighbouring mountains, I met a jackal, who suffered me to creep up within range, and I brought him down at the first shot.

On the 20th of June, the caravan passed by the Koordish village of Jendek, and we entered the mountains, leaving the large village of Delibaba, inhabited exclusively by Koords, to the left. The morning was so cold, that I was almost freezing, notwithstanding Mackintosh and cloak. We rode through a narrow pass, containing a wonderful echo, the responses of which were freely elicited by the guns and pistols of the caravan. Our tents were pitched in a narrow valley, watered by a brook, and I ascended the neighbouring hills, hoping to obtain a view of Mount Ararat, but intervening mountains shut out the prospect. The Turkish Cavass told me, after my return, that the hill I had ascended, was one of the most dangerous spots in the land of the Koords, and if I had made my excursion ten years ago, my life would have been in imminent danger. In former years, it

was a rare case for a caravan to encamp in this pass, without being attacked by swarms of Koords. But since the introduction of the Nizam, these attempts have gradually died out, and now you very seldom hear of such accidents.

Towards evening, we were visited by a Koordish chieftain, in a handsome costume. He did not wear a beard, but long and bushy mustachios, like the Janissaries of old, his head was enveloped in a huge turban, and his body in a short burka, whilst very wide trousers completed his attire. He caused his horse to be shod by one of our Armenians, and begged one of our merchants for a pocket knife, as a token of remembrance. He did not pay a farthing for the shoeing of his horse, and rode off with a laconic expression of thanks, but he was saluted with the utmost politeness by all our party, including the Caravan-Baschi. When I asked the Kadertschi, afterwards, why he did not insist on being paid for his time and trouble, he replied :

“ You may laugh, if you please, but if you were to meet that fellow alone, all your courage would evaporate.”

and I admit that the Koord, who was armed to the teeth, with gun, pistols, and sword, looked uncommonly like a robber chieftain.

The following day, Kara-gös gave the signal for starting, much later than usual, and we only made a short march, because it was desirable to spare some sick horses. We encamped near the summit of the pass. Our eyes were, at length, gladdened at this place, with the sight of a few bushes, growing by a brook, the first specimens of large vegetation we had seen since leaving Erzeroum.

I made an excursion to the neighbouring height, and obtained a wide and distant prospect, the eye embracing, on one hand, the snowy chain, giving birth to the Euphrates, and forming the centre of the Armenian highlands, and constituting the extreme Eastern horizon of these highlands. The mighty Ararat appears, seen from here, like an immense pyramid of snow, shooting up into the transparent blue of the heavens, like a silver cone. At this distance (more than twelve miles) the mountain of the Deluge, which towers aloft without a rival, rising like a colossal ghost from the dark background, presents a much grander appearance

than at Etchmiazin, and close at hand, at the foot of the ravine of St. Jacob, another white summit could be detected near the giant mountain, and was probably the little Ararat. The mountain chain, of which the group of Ararat forms the eastern boundary, becomes lower and more formal in shape, losing its bold and picturesque features as it approaches the foot of the Great Volcano. The other large volcanoes beyond the great plain of the Araxes were not visible where I stood. Straight before me, to the north, the solitary dome of the Kussah-Dagh, partially covered with snow, towered aloft, and even the ridges of Lasistan, towards Ispir could be discerned, while the prospect was obstructed to the southward, by higher mountains.

On the 22nd of June, as the caravan was on the march towards the eastern declivity, I saw about dawn, several Koordish horsemen, armed with bamboo-lances, gallop down to the head of our column. I was riding near the leader, and anticipating a serious attack, I had unslung my double-barrelled gun, when my Armenian driver warned me not to show any hostile intentions to the Koords. The armed Kadertschis allowed

the horsemen to come up, without let or hindrance, and even the Turkish cawass rode along quietly, with his usual Turkish phlegm and dignity, suffering his lance and horsetails to lie on his shoulder. It was evident that no hostile intentions were apprehended on the part of the Koords. They rode straight up to the Caravan-Baschi, and there ensued, shortly after, a vehement dispute. I soon ascertained that they reproached our leader, in the most violent language, because he had taken our caravan over the finest pasturing ground, which had been trampled under foot by the cattle. Karagös was quite timid and humble in his demeanour towards these Koords, and directed that the column should strike out in another direction, this deviation brought us over the ridge to the eastern declivity, rising from the plain of Topra-Kaleh.

We were surrounded by splendid pastures, the ground was covered with Alpine flowers, and to the southward the eye dwelt in the summits of the Saiban-Dagh, rising above the great Lake of Van. This mountain is, probably, the highest in Armenia, after Ararat; it was covered with a thick mantle of snow, and ap-

pears to be an extinct volcano. We now encountered the first trees that we had seen since leaving Erzeroum, consisting of prateas, willow-leaved pear trees, and birches.

Kara-gös decreed, that the following day should be a day of rest, as he had two sick horses, of which one died in the course of the morning. The following morning, shortly after the departure of the caravan, he directed the head of the other sick horse to be cut off, and laid by the road side, as an offering to God, to protect the caravan against all accidents. To the same end Kara-gös ordered two lambs, that he had bought from the Koords, to be slaughtered. The roasted meat was distributed among the caravan drivers, without any reference to creed.

The Armenians are one of the most superstitious races on earth. During my wanderings in Persian and Turkish Armenia, many anecdotes, occasionally of a very humorous description, were related to me, showing an extraordinary love of the mysterious, and an anomalous degree of credulity, in a people endowed with so much natural sense and penetration, and which can only be accounted

for, by the total want of schools, and of all education. Priestly tricks are as easy as child's play, amongst a people so inclined to the marvellous, and so governed by superstition; and it is the interest of the monks to impede the introduction of books, and the dissemination of learning, which has been so zealously advanced by the Mechitarist party, in Armenia.

On the second day, the number of our Koordish visitors, was considerably on the increase. There is a great diversity of type and costume amongst these mountaineers. They have even fewer national characteristics than the Kabyles of the Atlas, and there is abundant evidence that a great mixture has taken place in the Koordish blood and language, the latter consisting of a medley of Turkish, Persian, and Arabic words. Nevertheless, we observed some elegant figures, and noble Oriental faces, by the side of others with most ungainly figures, and uncouth features, presenting specimens of monstrous noses, reminding me of the nomadic Yezidees, on the lake of Gocktschai. There was an equal diversity in costume. Some wore plain turbans, others had

a number of variegated cloths, of all possible colours, bound round their grey fur caps. Others, again, wore only these grey fur caps. They appeared to have a general partiality for gaudy colours. Some were dressed cap-a-pie, in fiery red, with very full trousers.

Amongst these Koords, were two important chieftains, whose authority was acknowledged by all the Koordish hordes of these mountains. They asked the cawass to give them a written attestation, that the caravan had passed the mountains without being troubled by thieves. The cawass and Caravan-Baschi seemed not quite free from suspicions, and refused to give the voucher before the following morning, which induced the Koordish chiefs to pass the night in our encampment. In the course of the evening, we had a tremendous storm, with a hurricane, which threw down our tents, whilst we were soaked to the bones by torrents of rain that accompanied it. The storm moved on eastward, the heavy clouds split over our heads, and a bright beam of light irradiated our pasturing horses, who had congregated together in a large group, during the height of the tempest, and began

now to frolic joyfully and saucily over the dewy meadows. The tempest appeared to vent all its fury on the heights of Ararat. The colossal white pyramid was shrouded by pitchy clouds, and brilliant flashes illumined the silver peak of the mountain of the flood. During ten years of travel in highland countries, I have seldom witnessed a tempest scene of such magnificence.

On the 24th June, the caravan moved over the table-land of Topra-Kaleh, also known by the name of Alischgehrt. The danger of Koordish attacks was over, nor did our cawass hesitate any longer to give the chieftains their voucher. The plateaux of Pasin and Topra-Kaleh, are separated by a ridge running north and south, and the plain of Topra-Kaleh is watered by a number of artificial canals, like that of Erzeroum, yielding a luxuriant crop of grass. We encamped near the village of Koschian, of which the population is half Koordish and half Armenian. But Turkish is the common vehicle of linguistic intercourse, although the Koordish tongue begins to predominate in many of the neighbouring villages, whereas Armenian is decidedly

distanced by both the former idioms, and is only given the preference in these places, which possess Armenian convents and pilgrimages.

At this place, Kora-gös, bought from the Koords, a sturdy young cob, for which he paid 560 Turkish piastres. The Koordish breed of horses, is inferior to the Persian in beauty, harmony of form and elegant action, nor can it be compared with the Turcoman breed, for size and strength. In Russian Armenia, the green plateaux of Karabagh and the vicinity of Gumri, produce a finer breed of horses. Much less can the Koordish be compared with the Arab steed, the pride and ambition of all Eastern chieftains. Nevertheless, the Koordish breed has many good qualities. They are fiery, swift, docile, and like almost all Oriental horses of a gentle temper, without a vestige of those vicious tricks which are peculiar to the horses of the American Pampas, and of the Russian steppes. The Koordish horses have, moreover, that peculiar, easy, Oriental pace, which is so painfully missed when you are afterwards mounted on European horses, and

especially on Cossack stallions. I was told by eye-witnesses, that in the last Persian campaign, the Koordish cavalry always overtook the Cossacks in a short run. But during a pursuit, lasting for a day, the Oriental horses lost breath, and were invariably caught by the steady pace of the Cossack horses.

Accompanied by the Turkish cawass, and by my Polish servant, I made an excursion to the town of Hassan-Kaleh, which is situated six miles from the caravan-road. I found that it was a dismal, inconceivably wretched and dilapidated hole. Seven-eighths of the houses were in ruins, and had been deserted by their inhabitants. The citadel stands, overhanging the town, on a limestone rock; its walls are in a most dilapidated condition. Topra-Kaleh contains nothing worthy of note, save a Christian church, with the grave of an Armenian saint, and a mosque. The population, which live huddled together, consist, for the most part, of Armenians; and the Bey, or governor residing here, is a Koord by birth, and son of the Pacha of Bajasid. To my inquiries respecting the awful desolation of the place, I received the usual answer: that the town has

fallen into decay only since the last occupation by the Russians. All the thriving Armenian families of the place had followed the Russian army across the Araxes, and emigrated. We could not obtain even bread or rice for ready money at Topra-Kaleh. The people offered us, however, some jasurt, with raw barley floating in it, and the cawass strove to reconcile me to our bad fare, by the intelligence that brandy was to be had in a neighbouring booth, I gave him leave to drink as much as he listed, at my expense, and the Turk, thanking me, proceeded to empty no less than eight good-sized glasses. He was not in the least intoxicated by the draught, only slightly exhilarated, and talkative, and merry, nor have I ever met such a capacity for imbibing, even among the Tchernomorski Cossacks, so that I am forced to award the palm to the cawass, as the greatest hero of the bottle, that I have ever known, in three hemispheres.

On the 25th of June, we marched four hours farther over the plateau, and encamped on a stream, called by the Armenians, Boschögen-su, a tributary of the Murad-tschai. The country was richly adorned with beautiful plants, and

though the grass was not more luxuriant than in our German meadows, it was much thicker than in the plateau of Erzeroum and Hassan-Kaleh, because of the superior system of irrigation here. Nevertheless, it is quite a problem, why, in a country covered with snow seven months in the year, and watered with heavy showers in summer, artificial irrigation should be required to produce a degree of productivity, falling short of that in the fine Swiss pastures.

The mountains at the south of the plain had still a thick covering of snow. To the north, the summits appeared less elevated, and we had lost sight of Ararat. I caught a good number of trout this day; the weather was fine and clear, with beautiful moonlight nights, and we were surrounded with a large society of cuckoos.

The following day, we approached the end of the plateau, forming a valley, and we bivouacked near the village of Kara-Kilissa, with a miserable church. On the 27th of June, we reached the end of the plateau, and pitched our tents near the Eastern Euphrates. The next day we marched for some hours

through the valley of the Murad-tschai, here a very rapid stream, thirty feet broad.

Two miles from our bivouac was the Armenian village of Utsch-Kilissa,* with a celebrated convent and church, which the Armenians believe to contain the bones of St. John the Baptist, thus entering into competition with the Cathedral of St. Lorenzo, at Genoa, which also lays claim to the same honour. This is one of the most venerated and frequented pilgrimages in all Asia, and those pilgrims who have recited their prayers, heard mass, and made offerings at this shrine, enjoy even greater credit, on their return home, than those devotees who have visited the more celebrated, but also more accessible shrine of Etchmiazin, and have been satisfied with touching the relics of St. Gregory the Enlightener. It is, probable, that the dangers of encountering Koords by the way, enhance the merit of a visit to Utsch-Kilissa.

Scarcely was the caravan encamped, ere the Bishop of Utsch-Kilissa rode out to meet and greet us, attended by his ecclesiastics, here called Kara-basch, *i. e.*, black heads, on account of

* Three churches.

their black cowls. They were all well armed, and they greeted us by firing a salute. This solemn greeting was owing to the presence of Kara-gös, who never passed the place without piously attending mass, kissing the relics, and leaving a handsome present for the priests. After a mutual welcome, the venerable Bishop Sahach, condescended to notice me, and invited me to visit his sanctuary, though he perceived at once that I was a heretic of the English Church. I immediately accepted his invitation, and followed the cavalier clergy over a bridge with two arches, spanning the angry tide of the Murad-tschai, and in a dilapidated condition.

The legend relates that this convent is one of the four sanctuaries founded in Armenia, by St. Narses Magnus, grandson of St. Gregory, the Enlightener. Formerly there were two other churches in the neighbourhood, which tradition reports to have been destroyed by the Koords or Turks. The ignorant monks could not give me much information relating to the age and history of this sanctuary. Even the Bishop was a man of contracted mind, not more dignified or civilized than the monks of the Sewaan island, in Lake Gocktschai, whose

institutions and habits I have described in my work on Russian Armenia. Their indifference and ignorance about the annals of their convent is enough to show the degraded state of the clergy. Every traveller seems to have been regaled with a different version by them. The date of its foundation fluctuates from 306 to 288 in their accounts, nor do they appeal to any documents for proof. Even the origin of the name was a matter of dispute with the Bishop, who admitted that two other churches destroyed in the Turco-Persian wars, used to stand near, but he could not specify the particulars, only adding that it was a very long time ago. The present convent is a very poor place, and pays the Pacha a yearly tribute of two hundred silver roubles. Surg-Ohannes, St. John, is the clerical name of the edifice, which has rather an imposing appearance, amidst the misery of the surrounding villages, but at Tiflis or Constantinople, it would be shorn of a good deal of its splendour. As this convent has been minutely described by previous travellers, we shall, as usual, avoid going over the same ground, only adding a few words to complete what they have said. The church

consists of a nave, resting on sixteen columns. To the right is a side nave filled with monuments, to the left the grave of St. Stephen. In the back ground, to the left, is the chapel of that saint, and to the right, is the chapel and grave of St. John the Baptist. On entering this church, the spectator is struck with its lowness, extent and darkness. A priest lighted some tapers in the main altar, in the centre, but their dim light scarcely admitted of our distinguishing surrounding objects. The pious ecclesiastic hastened to lock up the present I made for this lighting of tapers, without awaiting the douceur expected at the door. Over the chief altar is placed a picture of the Madonna, with the Saviour resting on her lap.

It is singular that no traveller has spoken of the large painted figures, on the walls, representing the likenesses of saints, with disproportionately large heads, and deformed bodies. Conspicuous among them is St. George, the Dragon slayer, a colossal figure with misshapen limbs. By his side is another mail clad knight, of the size of life. The cuirass worn by him resembles the armour

of our Middle Ages. These paintings must either be very old, or painted with very bad colours on a bad ground, for a large part of them is erased, or has fallen from the walls.

The convent of Utsch-Kilissa is, to a certain extent, still under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchal See of Etchmiazin, but the influence of the Catholic and High Armenian clergy, has diminished since they no longer reside in Moslem ground. The seven senior Padres travel once a year to Etchmiazin, and carrying bread, butter and cheese as presents, bring back myrrhon or consecrated oil, in return. Only a small part of the produce, and dues of the church-lands of Utsch-Kilissa finds its way now to head-quarters. The finances of the convent have materially improved of late, owing to the greater security of the country, which has occasioned a much greater affluence of pilgrims, some of whom come even from the Don. The convent has been repeatedly plundered by Koords, Turks and Persians; the last onslaught was made by the Koords in 1828.

The bones of the saint have frequently

changed residence at an earlier period, and according to the researches of Petermann, the Evangelist John is named as the first distributor of these relics. He gave the residue of the Baptist's remains to his disciple Polycarp of Smyrna, who preserved them at Ephesus. Firmilianus brought them thence to Cæsarea in Cappadocia, where his teacher Origen, filled the place of bishop, during the persecution of the Christians under Decius, A.D. 251. The relics remained at Cæsarea, till the visit of Gregory the Enlightener, who begged the Patriarch Leontes of Cæsarea to give them to him. After some resistance, the latter gave Gregory part of the relics, only retaining a small portion of them. But the inhabitants of Cæsarea rebelled in consequence of his liberality, and were only subdued by the firm resistance of the Governor.

St. Gregory wandered on with the bones to Innaknean; at that period the head-quarters of idolatry in Armenia, containing two celebrated altars with idols. The Saint concealed the relics in a vineyard near Musch, and during a certain night the spot was lighted up with a supernatural splendour. The idolaters were vanquished in two battles, their altars were

destroyed, and a chapel was built on their site, in which some of the bones of the Saint were deposited. Petermann's researches led him to conclude that this occurred on September the 12th, 302; but we are not referred to the Armenian authorities that establish this date. A convent in Musch received a small portion of the bones, and the name of Howhanna-wankh resulting from it. The remainder were deposited at Utsch-Kilissa; but the relics, which are perhaps not genuine, have suffered much injury from the wrecks and ravages of war, having dwindled to two hands bound in brass, and exposed on the monument of the Baptist.

The little village near the convent is inhabited partly by Armenians, and partly by a population of uncertain nationality, called Tere-Kameh, and presenting much analogy to gypsies. The Tere-Kameh, who occur in various valleys of Armenia, proceeded originally from the Turcoman desert, and speak a Turkish dialect, differing considerably from the Stamboul idiom. Some travellers have confounded them with the Yezidees. The monks employ them as servants and day labourers, in guarding their flocks and tilling their lands.

It is evident, at the first glance, that the friars of Utsch-Kilissa are just as ignorant and benighted as the monks of the Sawan island, in Lake Gocktschai, and as the Gregorian-Armenian clergy generally. Gross ignorance, stupidity, suspiciousness of Europeans, covetousness and immorality, are the predominant characteristics of these ecclesiastics. They are totally unacquainted with the culture of the sciences, music, and the arts, which embellish even monastic life in the West. They avoid all reading, and know their prayer-books by heart. The convent library scarcely contains one hundred dusty, worm-eaten books, that are never touched. Consul Brandt, of Erzeroum, who asked to see it, found in it a Moses of Choren, with a Latin translation. The prior showed it to him as a foreign book, which he did not understand. Not only was he ignorant of Latin, but he did not appear even to comprehend old Armenian. These monks, who are mean, humble, officious, and cringing to Europeans of high rank, are arrogant, domineering, hard-hearted, and miserly to their flock, and especially to their poorer brethren. They readily assume an external show of virtue and self-denial,

whilst, in secret, they indulge freely in vice, as we were informed by persons who had known them intimately for many years. Envy and jealousy reign supreme amongst them. They do not appear to have a shadow of brotherly or neighbourly love, or of kindness and courtesy in the Christian acceptation of those terms. All who have attempted, like the French, Swiss, and American missionaries, to live on a familiar footing with them, have ended by turning away from them in the utmost disgust.

The caravan started at an early hour on the 29th of June. Kara-gös, and most of the Kadirtschis, staid behind in the convent to hear morning mass, and perform their devotions. They only overtook us in the evening. We pitched our tents four miles this side of Diadin, on the right bank of the river Murad-tschai. From this spot, the great Ararat was presented, in all his majesty and splendour, towering like a giant above the lower mountains, towards the end of the Agri-Dagh chain. The mighty pile was enveloped during the first faint blush of dawn by a slight mist, and only exhibited its colossal outline. About noon, the mountain stood out before us in all his glory, mantled with his

eternal snows. The icy cuirass appears to descend lower down on the south than on the north side, near Erivan. At this period of the year, the lowest border of ice and snow is scarcely 7000 feet above the sea. The silver mantle is broken by dark ribs of rock, till you arrive at an elevation of 10,000 feet; and it is only after passing above this region that you encounter the pure and spotless sheet, intersected by small glaciers. The view of Ararat on this side appeared to me far sublimer than that obtained from the plain of the Araxes. This celebrated mountain, which I had visited the year before, on the Russian side, riveted my eyes, nor was I ever weary of gazing at it through the telescope. The mountain presents the most diversified aspects, according to the spot whence you view it. On this side, it offers the appearance of a tolerably regular cone, whereas, viewed from Etchmiazin, it has the aspect of an irregular, massive pile, with a very broad summit. The Little Ararat was almost unencumbered with snow, and, notwithstanding its elevation of 12,000 feet, it was completely eclipsed by its gigantic neighbour.

On the following morning, I directed my

horse to be saddled an hour before the departure of the caravan, and rode over to Diadin, escorted by the Turkish cawass and my interpreter. Our path was illumined by the beams of the moon. We reached the wretched little place before dawn; and long ere we arrived, our approach elicited the loud baying of the dogs, who were silenced by the halloo of the Koordish herdsmen. This country is far from secure, being haunted by large and small bands of Koordish banditti, who, after committing their depredations, retire to the border mountains, on the Russian ground, near Ararat, or to Persia. This circumstance renders the people of Diadin distrustful and vigilant. After the cawass had exchanged a few words with the Koords, the latter led us to the Serai, a ruinous place, the residence of the Turkish Beg, Abdul-Rizak, brother of the Pacha of Bajasid. Diadin is one of the dreariest Koordish nests I visited; its castle is attributed to the Genoese, and most of its houses are in ruins. It is said to stand on the site of an ancient and important Armenian city, named Zahrawan; but, at present, it is only occupied by a few hundred Koords, with a sprinkling of Armenians. Diadin is, however,

a place of importance to the caravans in winter, as they generally obtain provisions, and an escort here, if required. It is only the larger caravans of one hundred muskets that venture farther into the mountains without a guard.

I obtained some refreshment at the house of an Armenian, who, in dress, tongue and manners, was more like a Koord than anything else. He stated that all his brethren, at Diadin, had migrated into Russia, where they were thriving, and on comparing the misery of these half-savage Christians, with the security and protection of Russian Armenia, I thought the lot of his comrades almost preferable, notwithstanding the oppression of the Russian employés.

The Eastern Euphrates or Murad-tschai, rises in the green slopes of Ala-Dagh near Diadin, where the Haidemanli Koords dwell. The sources of this river have never been properly explored, but the journey would be attended with considerable danger, owing to the Koords of this district, who are reckoned very poor, savage and inhospitable, though they have become rather tamer since the campaign of Omar Pacha.

The caravan made a very short journey this day, not venturing to encamp far from Diadin, on account of the robbers. The Seraskier of Erzeroum has made the Bey of Diadin answerable for all damages inflicted on travellers, but the influence of the latter is chiefly dependant on the superiority of the Turkish pastures over the Russian and Persian cattle runs. I wished to make an excursion to Ala-Dagh, but was deterred by the representations of the cawass, and resolved, therefore, to visit Bajasid instead, and to rejoin the caravan at the frontier. The cawass, who accompanied me, claimed an escort from Abdur-Rizak, and we started, a body of ten well armed horsemen. It is worthy of note, that this place is remarkable for a very large breed of beautiful greyhounds of Persian race, with yellow skin and pendant ears. The inhabitants keep them partly for their own domestic pleasure, partly for the chace. Hares, jackals and foxes, are chiefly hunted with greyhounds in this country. It is usual for a horseman to proceed with a couple of greyhounds, into the plain to search after game. As these greyhounds have not the fine scent of other hounds, the

huntsman must commonly look for the game himself, and if he sees a jackal or hare unable to find cover in the plain, he gives spur to his steed, darting in the direction of the game. The dogs discovering by this, what they have to do, commonly overtake the victim very speedily, with their long legs. It is reckoned, that a Persian greyhound, at full speed, clears 28 miles (7 German miles) in an hour.

We advanced through a narrow rocky valley, watered by the turbulent current of the Murad-tschai. The pass gradually widens to the south, as you approach Ararat; but it cannot be compared in size to the great Araxes plain, beyond the Agri-Dagh. As we approached Bajasid, the evidence of volcanic action, became continually more apparent, till, at length, the whole country presented wonderful vestiges of the operation of subterranean fire, but our limits forbid a minute analysis of its geological formation.

We had left Diadin about 9 o'clock, A.M. In the plain, we experienced a scorching heat; the soil was dry and arid, not a village or a house was to be seen, between Diadin and Bajasid, or scarcely a human being, in fact, the

whole region appears accursed, and presents the appearance of an inhospitable waste. No person ventures alone through this district, even if armed to the teeth. Nothing but the escort of Koords, affords you any protection, as these robbers stand in awe of blood-feuds, nor do they willingly fight with their countrymen, even if they be not clansmen. I admit that the escorts provided by the Pachas and Beys, consist generally of the greatest rascals, and that they have a most cut-throat and thievish appearance. Their faces have no decided type, but much character and decision, and being bronzed by exposure to the sun and weather, they present a very wild appearance. Their weapons vary considerably, consisting usually of a bamboo lance, eight to nine feet in length, a thick double-edged dagger, a very curved sabre and a bad firelock, with a rude flint lock. The traveller may always confide in his Koordish escort, unless the Pacha or Bey have directed them secretly, to strip or slay him. This was the fate of the unhappy archæologist, Schulz, whose escort had received private instructions, from some villainous chieftain, to murder the poor traveller, who

was thought to have many valuables. Joubert, an envoy of Napoleon, was exposed to the same mischance, being betrayed by a ruthless Koordish Pacha of Bajasid, named Mahmoud, who was nominally subject to the Porte, but who harrassed and ruined the district, almost *à discretion*. Joubert wishing to avoid his clutches, stole across the mountains, but he was kidnapped by a chief of the Sibki-Koords, and handed over to Mahmoud, who cast the poor envoy into a damp underground prison. It is probable that the Pacha would have put him secretly to death, to appropriate the presents of Napoleon, had not the plague swept him off. Meanwhile, the unlucky captive gained time, and eventually, his freedom, through the pity of the wife of his keeper. Some persons have thought that Joubert gave an exaggerated account of his sufferings, but I have visited those dungeons, and can substantiate his veracity. The neighbourhood of the Russians has considerably broken the power of the Koords, who have learnt to tremble before the Seraskier of Erzeroum and the Consuls, and a tolerable degree of

security, reigns at present, in this desolate district.

We occasionally passed some solitary Koords, looking out from certain stations, who were pointed out to me as spies, but the sight of the cawass and our escort, deterred them from all attempts. Four miles from Bajasid we encountered a troop of Koordish horsemen, armed with bamboo lances, and bad muskets. They looked very suspicious and forbidding, and our escort informed us that they were notorious robbers. As we equalled them in numbers, and were superior in appointments, and carried no baggage with us, they gave us no trouble. The Koords do not readily venture an attack, unless tolerably sure of success. The strangers exchanged a few words with our escort in the Koordish tongue, directing their hawk's eyes fixedly upon us, and after we had left them at some distance, one of our men told us that the robbers had asked about the encampment of the caravan, and they evidently followed its direction, in order to steal some horses by night.

Bajasid is picturesquely situated, its houses rising in an amphitheatre on the slopes of the Ala-

Dagh. The streets are steep. Some taper minarets and mosques rise conspicuously above the houses. The old castle stands on rocks of most bizarre formation and colouring, and of the most fantastic and singular appearance.

To the west of Bajasid, stood once the old Armenian town of Pakoran, a colony of slaves, and a receptacle for cut-throats and rascals. In fact, this region appears to have always harboured a nest of villains. Bajasid is now a wretched and dilapidated town, not having one sound house in ten, on the average. The population is very miserable, but it has retained the wild Koordish character. Even the Armenians, who are much reduced since the Exodus to Russia, are quite Koords in dress, manners, and tongue. They form one-fourth of the population, which does not number more than four hundred families. Behlül Pacha, at that time its governor, had left the castle, which was almost ruined by an earthquake (1840), and lived in a modest house. He obtained quarters for me at the house of a wealthy Armenian, who entertained me tolerably well, but observed very frankly:—that he had housed all distinguished European travellers to Bajasid, and that he hoped I should

not fall short of them in generosity. Love of lucre seemed his ruling passion, nor could he wait for my taking leave, in order to press me for backshish.

Meanwhile the cawasses came to fetch me, and escort me to visit their lord, who was in the act of adorning himself with brilliants when I arrived. He was seated on his divan, surrounded by Turks and Koordish chiefs. The whole audience-chamber was filled with armed men, including some moustachioed Koords of really terrible aspect, who might have stood models for Salvator Rosa.

Behlül Pacha was an insignificant thin man of fifty, lacking Turkish grandeur and Oriental tact, even observable in Koords. After examining my firman and papers, he expressed his readiness to assist me in any way that lay in his power. He answered for my security in his Pachalik ; but he cautioned me against going alone, even in the town, for there was a whole host of bad characters infesting this district. As he said this, I could not avoid casting a glance at the wild figures and forbidding faces surrounding us. Their black eyes were riveted on me and on my Pole, who was seated beside me as interpreter.

Behlül Pacha was very communicative, and related in Turkish, which he spoke with a Koordish accent, that his father Mahmoud, had made many attempts to reach the summit of Ararat, but the most daring Koords had never effected it. He said that they were always seized, at a certain height, with giddiness and sickness, the effects of "bad air." He would not hear of its having been ascended by Russian travellers.

The deserted palace of Bajasid is one of the handsomest in the Turkish empire, and surpassing in solidity the Seraglio of Stamboul. Even in its present ruinous condition, it offers quite a royal appearance, with its cupolas, columns, and walls of red marble, on which the town is built.

We wandered, lost in admiration, through its splendid apartments, still showing the abundant vestiges of former magnificence. The architect was a Persian, and the decorations testified the delicate handywork of Persian art. Close at hand is a mosque, with a high minaret and a dome, which, by a singular accident, had not suffered even a rent from

the earthquake. A lofty and elegant marble mausoleum adorns the court, containing the remains of Mahmoud in a coffin placed in the vaults underneath, inclosed by four handsome alabaster tablets, with inscriptions from the Koran. An aged Mollah sat near the tomb, reading aloud from the Koran. He did not seem at all surprised at my appearance, cast an indifferent look at me, stretched out his withered hand, and asked for backshish in an authoritative tone. Nor did he appear quite satisfied with a piece of five piastres. The people told me that the old Mollah lingered there the whole day, praying for the soul of Mahmoud, and we may readily admit that the old criminal required intercessions, after the many crimes he had committed. Behlül Pacha cannot be denied a fair share of filial piety, as he pays the old Mollah for his devotion, notwithstanding his straightened finances.

Though the castle is tolerably strong, it offered no effectual resistance to the Russians in 1828. Behlül Pacha had been removed from his post in consequence, but he was soon

recalled, as the Porte discovered that it required a chief of Koordish blood to manage the Koords. We visited the numerous and ruinous works surrounding the citadel, which had dismal, damp dungeons underneath many of them. We attempted to ascend some of the terraces, but were deterred by the dilapidated condition of the walls. Notwithstanding its strong position, Bajasid seems deplorably deficient in military defences in a respectable state of preservation, though it is the only antagonistic position to the Great Russian fortress near Erivan, and the only protection of the caravan road from Erzeroum to Persia.

The Murad-tschai rises in this vicinity, running in a north and south-west direction ; it flows one hundred and eleven versts through the Pachalik ; its banks are bare, and its current moderately rapid. It becomes navigable in the Sandschakat of Malergherd. The country surrounding Bajasid is well irrigated, and though deficient in timber, offers fine crops of grass. The climate of Bajasid is cool, though so near the hot plains of Persia. Its situation is so healthy,

that the population look the very picture of health, though visited every year by the plague, owing to the carelessness of the inhabitants, whilst the cleanliness of the neighbouring Persians prevents its spread. The Russians attribute curative virtues to henna, rubbed over the hands.

CHAPTER IV.

Departure from Bajasid — The Pass of Khasi-Göl — An Adventure with Koordish Robbers—Entrance into Persia —Gorawa—The Table Land and Town of Choi—Arrival at Lake Urmia—Scenery—Arrival at Tabris—Situation and description of the City—Life of the Inhabitants—Persian Women—A Persian School — The Bazaar—Sociability—Nestorian Women—Temporary Marriages.

I LEFT Bajasid on the 2nd of July, escorted by three Koordish horsemen, who were in the service of the Pacha, and being known to the robbers of the vicinity, were a sufficient security. I overtook our caravan at the top of the Pass of Khasi-Göl, *i. e.*, the Fox's Source, so called from the number of those animals, and jackals. The column had stopped there since the morning, and had encountered an adventure that had stirred up the bile of Kara-gös, though it was difficult to keep one's coun-

tenance on hearing the narrative, which ran as follows :

At the moment when the caravan reached the top of the Pass, the Koordish robbers managed to carry off some of the pack-horses, notwithstanding the precautions of the kadir-tsches and drivers. The Armenian riding nearest to the caravan, did not dare to fire at them, for fear of blood feuds, for the death of one Koord would have led to an attack from the whole clan. But by firing in the air, the watch called up all the armed Armenians, and after some consultation, Kara-gös resolved to send two drivers, who understood Koordish, well-mounted, but unarmed, to induce the robbers, by threats or promises, to give up their spoil. The two men, capitally mounted, flew like the wind over the misty slopes to the highest plateau, above where the Koords were supposed to be. After the delay of an hour, passed in anxious expectation, they were seen coming back, with dejected looks, on foot, and stripped to the shirt. They had fallen into the hands of a band of Koords, who haunted this district, and who, passing most of their time over the Persian border, set the authority of Behlül

Pacha at defiance. The caravan Bashi sent the same day to Bajasid, to complain of the theft, and determined to lay the case before the Persian chiefs of Kilissa-kent, and Choi. Though these dignitaries had not a large force under them, the Koords were discreet enough to avoid exciting the animadversions of their superiors, and to push matters to extremities, and I ascertained that he recovered the best part of the spoil.

Our encampment was in a very solitary position, the barometer showing an elevation of 7240 feet. There was not a trace of agriculture, and the crop of grass was very meagre. Our goods and horses were brought close together, and carefully guarded. The appearance of a single Koord among the rocks, excited general consternation, as he was regarded as a robber's scout. Our Armenians discharged their pieces frequently during the night, to show the Koords they were on the watch. The Lasian drivers, who appeared more collected, saved up their powder, and I placed my only confidence in these people and in the Turks. However, the night passed over without an adventure, and we started by broad daylight.

The eastern declivity of the Khasi-Göl pass, descends rather abruptly into the Persian territory, but it appears as green and fruitful as the Turkish side. This part of the border between the two empires, consists almost entirely of pasture land. But this results chiefly from the elevation, and not from intentional devastation. We encamped about noon near Kilissa-kent, in a high valley, forming one of the first approaches to the highlands of Persian Armenia. The scenery is rendered lively by the presence of numerous villages, and black Koordish tents ; and the national costume here changes suddenly. Pointed lambskin caps, and Persian kastans, with pendant sleeves, take the place of the Turkish attire. On the 4th of July, we proceeded through narrow valleys, and bivouacked on a table-land, which, though less extensive and irrigated than the plateaux of Turkish Armenia, was covered with villages, corn fields and meadows. A system of partial irrigation diminishes the natural aridity of the soil. I was not a little surprised at the improvement in husbandry, in passing the border. The books of European travellers represent Persia as presenting a much

more desolate and depopulated appearance, even than Asiatic Turkey. These observations do not seem applicable to the province of Aserbeidschan, and especially the border districts on this side. Save the salt marshes to the south of Lake Urmia, I found that the Persian landscapes of this vicinity offered, in general, a much more industriously and carefully cultivated appearance than those of the Turkish territory. The first appearance of Persia is decidedly prepossessing, especially on this border. Most of the frontier districts, on the Turkish side, even near the caravan roads, are a howling wilderness, the lair of wild beasts, and the repair of Koordish robbers. The first Persian villages, certainly, appeared rather indigent, but they were embowered in verdure, in gardens and trees. Greater courtesy in the natives is said to accompany this improvement in husbandry. Turkish is, however, still the prevalent language here, as throughout Aserbeidschan. We met this day a caravan of laden dromedaries, which never make long journeys, or cross the Persian frontier. They were remarkably small animals, with a thicker growth of hair, than I have seen elsewhere. A wedding party passed our caravan towards

evening. The horsemen had no fire-arms, but they carried lances ; they curvetted merrily on their beautiful horses, in front of our bivouac, and appeared desirous of giving us a specimen of their skill in equitation.

Security increases also as you advance into Persia ; though we still occasionally saw the black tents of the Koords, who reminded me of the wild, picturesque robber chiefs of Salvator Rosa ; only, instead of the short dagger of the Italian bandit, they had long bamboo lances, and, instead of the pointed lamb-skin calpac, and tame Persian countenance, which I left on the right side of the Dschagatu ; they wore high yellow felt caps, or bulky turbans. Everywhere amongst these tribes I received a hospitable welcome, notwithstanding the thievish propensity which is not unjustly ascribed to them, and as I personally experienced sometime afterwards in the environs of the Koordish town of Bajasid. Our Armenians seemed to have dismissed all anxiety. The Persian chiefs of Salmas and Choi, though unprovided with regulars, appear to have established a better police here, than the Turkish authorities over the border. Armed with a fowling-piece, you

can wander alone through this region with tolerable security.

On the 5th of July, the caravan started at one in the morning, as the heat of the Persian sun at noon was very oppressive. We encamped about dawn, in a valley deficient in grass and water. The next day we passed the large Persian village of Gorawa, and encamped in a valley a short distance to the south-eastward. The neighbourhood of the village was beautifully cultivated, but the people had a miserable, and oppressed appearance. The Persian peasantry are, undeniably, more industrious than the Turkish, and understand agriculture, and the growth of cotton much better; but they are generally more fleeced and ground down by the superior, appointed over them by the Shah, than the Turks by their Pachas and officials. Their condition resembles that of the Fellahs of the Nile Delta. They are obliged to work the entire day, often under a scorching sun, and they only enjoy such a share of their produce as just suffices to keep their families from starving. All the residue falls into the clutches of the landlord, who resides at Teheran, Tabris, or some other great city, and tries to squeeze as

large rents as possible from his tenants, because he never feels secure that a command of the Shah or the Sardar will not deprive him of his possessions. Most of the proprietors had obtained their land through the interest of the Shah's powerful favourite, the Grand Vizier, Hadschi Mizza Agassi ; but they were obliged to secure his patronage by handsome presents, and to wring the last penny from their unfortunate tenants, in order to procure the necessary bribes.

On the 7th July, we reached the eastern end of the valley of Gorawa, which is separated from the plateau of Choi by a diagonal chain. Our lengthy column ascended the pass in measured tread, with an accompanying jingle of bells. After a march of twelve miles, we reached the head of the pass, and encamped near a fountain inclosed by masonry, resembling a marabout chapel in Barbary. About noon, we were visited by a heavy storm, accompanied with hail and torrents of rain. Notwithstanding the moderate elevation of the surrounding hills, the streams poured down their sides in floods, and the brook in the pass soon swelled to formidable dimensions, and though our tents were pitched

at some elevation above its bed, they were soon some inches under water, and our bales of goods were in serious jeopardy. The Armenians darted out of their tents in spite of the pouring rain, which they dread more than snow or cold, to raise barricades of stone to protect their goods. But Kara-gös issued directions for an immediate removal. The horses were soon driven in and loaded, and we removed to the shelter of a hill side, secure against the inroads of torrents, but offering nothing but thistles for the cattle.

The high table land of Choi deserves its name. It consists of a spacious plain, sixty miles in length, and almost equalling that of Erzeroum in dimensions. Its system of natural irrigation, and its natural fertility, are inferior to those of the Armenian highlands, but the ingenuity and industry of the inhabitants, who are almost a match for Englishmen in agriculture and horticulture, amply compensate for other deficiencies. Dams and other artificial channels divert the waters of the streams in all directions, especially near populous villages, and the natural aridity of the plain, is relieved by a series of verdant oases. The gardens and fields yield abundant crops, wherever human industry

succeeds in irrigating the land. But the plain would become a desert without this distribution of water.

The table-land of Choi presents a very inviting appearance to the eye of the European traveller, just arriving from the barren highlands of Armenia. The eye is relieved by the numerous gardens and shrubberies surrounding the different villages like a green curtain, and decorating the little houses with natural verandas. The sight of this charming foliage gently agitated by a cool breeze after a recent storm, combined with the exhilarating influence of the air, filled our whole party with a happy genial mood, in which the very horses seemed to share, and we all moved on to the town with light and elastic steps. The verdant meadows and artificial rivulets were fringed with silver poplars of large dimensions, which formed also a hedge round the numerous gardens, and in some places thick clumps, which reminded me of the groves in Schleswig-Holstein. The eye was gratified also, by the beauty and diversity of the fruit trees, including apple, pear, apricot, cherry, walnut, and especially mulberry trees. The latter were loaded with large white fruit

exceeding in flavour, any others that I have ever tasted. Mulberries are the most abundant fruit produced and consumed in Aserbeidschan. The black species are smaller, and not so sweet, but larger and more juicy than the white kind, and they are regarded in the larger cities, as the most savoury fruit next to grapes and apricots. No idea of the beauty of the Persian mulberry can be formed in Europe, where the same tree only yields small and indifferent fruit. The contrast is quite as great as that presented by the sour, shrivelled oranges of Hyères, and the golden globes of the groves at Blidah in Algeria. Most European vegetables are raised in the gardens surrounding Choi, which is likewise encompassed by a complete zone of flower-beds, producing a fine crop of roses, for which all Persians have as strong a partiality, as that which they feel for iced condiments. Wheat and barley are the predominant species of cereals in this district.

The town of Choi is almost buried under the growth of the surrounding foliage, and you are scarcely aware of its existence, till you are within the place, which is encompassed by an indifferent mud wall, an effectual protection

against Koordish forays, but absolutely useless against European field-pieces. The town is entered by two gates, and the architecture of the houses presents much analogy to that prevalent in Russian Armenia. The dwellings consist of low houses with mud walls, like those of Erivan, and the streets are unpaved. The two most conspicuous objects of the town are the spacious bazaar, and the Great Caravanserai, consisting of two large square courts, one of which is surrounded with fruit trees and adorned with a fountain. The shops and guest's chambers surrounding this court are spacious and cleanly kept. They answer as quarters to the poor tradesmen and lower classes, whilst the caravan cattle fill the court. The bazaar, which is of very unusual size in proportion to the town, is situated between the two caravanserai courts, and is the whole day full of life and bustle.

Our caravan did not pass through the town, but encamped at the distance of two miles, at a spot deficient in forage. But Kara-gös, and most of the kadertschis and drivers, accompanied me to town for the sake of diversion, and to make purchases in the bazaar. As we passed through the open

market place adjoining it, and advanced, riding through the compact throng of people, with which it was encumbered, the appearance of our Armenians elicited loud jeers and hooting from the rabble. But when the gaping mob caught sight of myself and my Pole, in rather grotesque half European attire, wearing large broad brimmed hats, the shouts and laughter exceeded all measure. Nevertheless, the Persian rabble appeared as cowardly as they were importunate and insolent. The first row of open mouthed bumpkins, who had almost barred our passage, drew back, and closed their lips most respectfully, so soon as I and my servant gave intimations that we were about to ply the lash.

On forming a closer acquaintance with these Persians, in the Caravanserai and bazaar, we found them very obtrusive, yet polite, amiable and complaisant. They are more grasping, even than the Greeks and Armenians, and cunning and rascally besides; but in other respects, they are not unpleasant to deal with, if you treat them like the Lazzaroni of Naples, in a quiet, but decided manner. I entered a cook's shop in the

bazaar, attracted by the savoury smell of roast lamb and pilaf, but the cook who was a rigid Shiite, refused to let me use his dishes, as they ought not to be polluted by the lips of an Infidel. Specimens of this kind of bigotry never occur among the Turkish and Arab Sunnites. Even the Bedouins and Kabyles of Algeria, do not refuse to drink camel's milk out of a glass previously soiled by Christian lips. As this was my first experience of Shiite fanaticism, I resolved to overcome the man's scruples by a volley of violent reproaches. Their effect was magical, his resistance dropped, and he became all humility. The last Russian campaign, in Persia, appears to have wrought a great change in the demeanour of the people, for previous to that event, a European could scarcely have ventured alone, in his national costume, and armed, among the groups in the bazaar. At present, the European Infidel is more respected than the faithful Asiatic, in this part of Persia, as well as in Oriental Turkey. The people are aware of the influence of the Consuls, and that offences against Europeans, are

punished ten times more severely by the Sardars, than those against natives.

I had brought my medicine chest with me to the khan. The entrance to my chamber was beset with a crowd of sick, directly the intelligence had circulated that a Frank hakhim had arrived. The number of ophthalmic patients is frightful at Choi, and throughout Aserbeidschan. Cataract is peculiarly prevalent, and it is probable, that on the average, every tenth person suffers from inflammation of the eyes. Native doctors have shops in the bazaar, but, like prophets, they have no honour in their own country, whereas European doctors are thought infallible by the Persians. All diseases are supposed to be speedily subdued by their pills, and the credulity of my Persian patients, here and elsewhere, was only equalled by their importunity. Cripples in the last stage of decay, to whom I gave some essence of peppermint, in order to get rid of them, went away fully convinced that they would recover youth and health. The native doctors showed me reluctantly their stores of medicine, consisting chiefly of vegetable

preparations. They, also, perform operations more skilfully and successfully than might be imagined. One of them showed me a stone from the bladder, almost as large as an egg, which he said he had cut out of a patient.

Though these Persians speak a corrupt Turkish dialect, and are partly of Tartaro-Turkish origin, their exterior, demeanour, and whole bearing, together with their temperament and character, are widely at variance with those of the Turks of Stamboul and Anatolia. They are tall, large-boned, handsome men, with oval sunburnt faces, approaching much nearer, in expression, to the national type of the race inhabiting the salt steppes of Khorasan, than to the Osmanlis of Armenia. The idiom is the only thing about them that reminds you of Turkey. Costume, manners, and customs are thoroughly Persian, in Aserbeidschan, where the Persian tongue is the universal medium of written intercourse among the higher classes, and is generally taught in the schools. The phlegmatic character and majestic reserve of the Turkish character, are here supplanted by the levity and animation of an obtrusive, complaisant, and inquiring people. On walking

through the halls of the bazaar, I was twice accosted by armourers, who begged me most politely to allow them to examine my fowling-piece and pistols. Though their fire-arms are very different from ours, they understood the mechanism of the latter immediately, and notwithstanding the superior splendour and decoration of the weapons of native manufacture, they immediately recognized the advantages of the European workmanship. In fact, the Persians may be deficient in the inventive genius of the West, but they cannot be denied an astonishing aptitude for imitation; indeed, I heard of surprising instances of this natural characteristic from Europeans, long domiciliated at Tabris.

Choi cannot be numbered among the largest or most splendid cities of the East, but its propinquity to the Russian and Turkish border gives it considerable commercial importance, without mentioning the flourishing smuggling trade carried on with Russian Trans-Caucasia, since the introduction of the new Russian customs. I admit that the display of merchandize in the bazaar of Choi is not nearly so splendid, or varied, as that at Tabris, but very consider-

able, in proportion to the size of the town, and the population of the vicinity. There was a respectable selection of Persian silks, shawls, carpets, peltries, and leather, besides the most usual European articles. The tradesmen in the bazaar, who seldom move from their shops in Turkey, were most pressing here, begging me to inspect their goods. Many of the merchants stopping at the caravanserai, brought me sundry articles, which they thought calculated to interest me, including Roman and Persian coins, modern coins, with effigies of saints, crosses of artificial gold, cornelian, and agate, on which talismans were engraved, &c. They also tried to make me take some written talismans, in a beautiful character, for which they asked exorbitant sums. Persian greediness showed itself here in a very odious light. Of all the people whom I have ever visited, none appear to attach so much weight to money as the Persians, and this passion appears to increase in intensity in proportion as you advance into the heart of Persia, among the genuine Persians. In fact, though the Turkish element may predominate physically in the people of Aserbeidschan, the Persian element

gives the prevailing colouring to their mental and moral constitution.

A European, travelling as hakhim, has one great advantage, *i. e.*, that he can protect himself against the importunity of his patients. He has only to require payment for his pills and mixtures, and the crowd in his antechamber, notwithstanding their implicit confidence in his healing powers, withdraw in quiet resignation. Even if he were certain of cure, a Persian would not readily part with money.

On the 9th of July, the caravan only advanced four miles, on account of the heat, and encamped at the foot of a range separating the table-land of Choi from the plain, containing Lake Urmia, with its occasionally luxuriant vegetation. I stayed this and the following day at Choi, to study Persian life and manners, as it was quite safe for me to overtake the caravan without an escort. Of all Oriental towns that I know, Erivan has the greatest resemblance to Choi, and the analogy must have been more striking when the former was under Persian rule. Kara-gös lingered here too, to settle the payment of the Persian customs' duties, which

are levied in this border town, amounting to eleven Turkish piastres for every bale. We overtook the caravan in the evening, encamped on the banks of the Abasibu. In the night, we were visited by a heavy thunder-storm and torrents of rain, making it necessary for us to dig channels round our tents, to carry off the water.

When we had reached the head of the pass, our eyes plunged down over the southern slope into the misty plain of the great Lake Urmia, with its six rocky islands. We passed by the villages of Hanadan, Almaserai, and Togdschi, and encamped near Hassan-Köi, situated at the north-west end of the great salt basin. The lake narrows, in this part, into a small arm, like that of Lake Van, on its north side. I candidly confess that I was disappointed at the first view of this celebrated scenery, having been led to anticipate, from the descriptions of previous travellers, that the Persian landscape in this vicinity is much more striking and picturesque. The northern shore of the lake is flat, and rises in a gently inclined plain to the hills. The numerous villages dotting its sur-

face were embowered in rice and wheat-fields, and amidst plantations of cotton and fruit-trees.

On the 11th of July, we advanced thirteen miles along the north bank of the lake, and encamped at the village of Kaftatchmeh, two miles from the lake, which I was able to approach quite close, as there were no marshes here. Opposite our camp, was the rocky island of Schachi, seven miles from the northern bank and rising four to five hundred feet above the dark green mirror of the waters. The island has but little arable land, and a thin population, scattered about in five villages.

To the southward, where the lake is widest, no mountains closed up the prospect, which, save where it was broken by the island, presented a boundless shining plain, of a black tinge, shading into green, in the foreground, and of a dark blue, blending with the sky, at the horizon. To the south-west, however, the eye was relieved by a fine mountain, with snowy summit, whose height, judging from its thick mantle of snow, in this hot season, cannot have been less than 10,000 feet. Nevertheless, the prospect does not present any broken or pic-

turesque rocky peaks. To the westward, a low, monotonous ridge runs parallel to the snowy chain before mentioned; and to the east, a few snowy summits were discernible above the site of Tabris.

The north side of Lake Urmia consists of a large, arid plain, of crescent shape, inclosed by bare mountains, and requiring artificial irrigation to make its salty soil productive, and even habitable. The climate is burning hot here in summer, and rather severe in winter. The plain is sprinkled, at short intervals, with villages, embowered in groves and verdure, forming charming oases, and relieving the dreariness of the prospect. At some distance from the villages, I observed large crops of cotton and wheat, with long, pendant, golden ears. The corn was cut in some places, and the yellow colouring of these crops did not improve the scenery.

In some directions, the crops approach the lake, but wherever there is a large deposit and thick crust of salt, all vegetation ceases. The lake has, undoubtedly, had a much larger extension at a former period. The composition of its bed and banks, and the geological features

of the plain and whole country, are full of interest and novelty, but must be omitted in the present sketch.

In the summer months, when the great salt lake is commonly as quiet as a pond in an English park, a deposit of mud results from the evaporation of the water. The natives describe the lake to be almost as tempestuous as the Euxine in spring. The prevalent colour of the water is blackish blue, in the centre, and at a distance, it appears azure, whereas close at hand it looks green, and almost black, and so dense, that fatty bodies, such as pigs, do not sink in it. According to the chemical analysis of the American Hitchcock, the only man who has decomposed it, the water appears to hold in solution an immense number of ingredients, especially decomposed vegetable matter. This may result from the putrescence of water plants, and marshy slime and mud, as well as from vegetable substances brought down by the torrents.

In some places, this mass of decayed plants, is so great, that it completely stops the swell and breakers at some distance from shore. In many parts, the banks of the lake consist of a deposit of yielding mud, which does not suffer

you to approach the water. This was the case during our march of twelve miles, parallel to the lake, on the 11th of July. I found some very singular tortoises in this vicinity, having a yellow body covered with dark green stripes, whilst the shell was green above, and yellow underneath.

On the 13th of July, we left the lake, and marched east, through a generally parched and arid country. At length, on the 14th of July, we arrived at the great city of Tabris, situated on the same plateau, which embraces the vast salt basin of Lake Urmia, with a circumference of two hundred miles. Our caravan had travelled slowly, being twenty-seven days on the road ; but Kara-gös had brought his bales, kadirtschis, drivers, and three hundred and sixty horses safe to their destination. I admit that he had lost six horses, four packs, and the trousers of some of his people at the hands of the Koords, and these sorrows may have occasioned him much bitterness and some grey hairs, but the purse of shining tomans handed him by his Greek employers, soothed his wounded spirit. I met the black-eyed baschi the same evening, and found his dismal features slightly transfigured by the shower of

gold, and an attempt at a smile played on his thin lips.

Tabris, or Tauris, is, at present, the second city in Persia, in dimensions, and the first in population. It is situated in bare, dreary plains, at the foot of lofty, barren, and fantastic mountains, rising precipitately to the east of the town, and almost encroaching on its north-eastern portion. These arid Persian landscapes, with the eccentric shape and colouring of the hills, would be a fine study for those artists who prefer desolate scenery to the verdant declivities of Germany, and the grassy uplands of the Tyrol. Happily, Persian horticulture, and artificial irrigation, have considerably modified this deficiency, and created a kind of small paradise, cast like a blooming garland among the naked rocks, encompassing the town. Tabris is surrounded by many hundred gardens, delighting the inhabitants with their grateful shade and delicious fruit.

Tabris contains sixteen thousand houses, and about one hundred and forty thousand inhabitants. Its streets and dwellings present such a degree of uniformity, that it requires some time for the stranger to become familiar with its

topography. The organ of locality is taxed very severely here, as there are few conspicuous buildings to fix the attention. I adopted the same plan here as in the Merceria of Venice, and by invariably following the most crowded and bustling streets, I always arrived at last in the Square of St. Marc, at Venice, and at the Great Bazaar, in Tabris, which plays a much more important part here, than the Bezestein, at Constantinople, being the centre and focus of all Persian life and business. Immediately after my arrival at the town, I made the acquaintance of some Cossacks, connected with the Russian embassy, and addressing them in Russian, begged them to show me a khan. They accordingly led me to a house, in one of whose dirty rooms, I found a crowd of brandy-drinking Russians, Armenians, and impudent women, who appeared engaged in the celebration of wild orgies.

Utterly disgusted, I left the house, and sent my servant to hire a room in a khan. Meanwhile, I chanced to stroll past a house, bearing the mighty British Lion painted on its wall, and the British ensign floating over the door, showing it to be the British Consulate. Fatigued

with my perambulations, I caused myself to be announced by one of the Persian servants, congregated, according to national custom, around the door. I found the Consul engaged in conversation with Dr. Cassolani, the only European physician at Tabris, and a native of Malta. When I handed over my letter of introduction, and explained my dilemma, Dr. Cassolani offered me a room in his house, in the politest manner. Mr. Bonham seemed also very amiable, but less sociable, and although he had a large house and a very small family, he had the same dislike to any inconvenience and trouble, as his colleague at Erzeroum. I confess that I did not receive a very favourable impression of English hospitality in the East. My letters from Lord Aberdeen and Sir Stratford Canning, did not produce so much effect as might have been anticipated from the position of those statesmen. In Asiatic Russia, far less splendid introductions generally secured me a friendly and really hospitable reception. On nearer acquaintance, I admit that Mr. Bonham lost some of his genuine English stiffness, and his formal character gave way to sallies of good humour. He had married a niece of Sir Robert Peel, a

beautiful and charming person, who had faced the dangers and hardships of the voyage and road, to accompany her husband to Persia. They spent the honeymoon on the stormy waves, and after residing awhile at Tabris, where their union was blessed with a lovely child, they proceeded with the young traveller to India and China, where Mr. Bonham obtained other appointments.

I was comfortably located in the house of Dr. Cassolani, and formed the acquaintance of a great number of Persians of all ranks, who, from noon to dewy eve, besieged the house of the wise hakhim, who had obtained a great reputation by a successful operation on a club foot. Amongst the patients were men of extremely strong constitution, who appeared perfect pictures of health and strength, and yet, who suffered from serious and painful disorders. For instance, one day a wealthy Persian came, of colossal size, and almost bronze complexion, accompanied by many servants, as usual with the opulent Dr. Cassolani looked at him a long time, searchingly, before he addressed him, and said to me in Italian : " This man might serve as model for a Hercules, and

yet I fancy that he has contracted a nervous disease, by excessive indulgence. This is not the first time that such a giant has come to me to seek for a strengthening treatment, that would enable him to continue the gratification of his sensual appetites." The anticipation of the Doctor was perfectly correct. The handsome, powerful Persian, complained of numbness in his hands, and admitted, privately to the Doctor, that he had brought this ailment on himself by excesses, and that they invariably increased after each visit to his well-stocked harem. Ophthalmic patients were, by far, the most numerous. Dr. Cassolani had twice operated successfully in cases of cataract, and his fame spread as far as Teheran, whither he subsequently removed, at the special request of the rheumatic Mahomed Schah.

Including its gardens and suburbs, the city of Tabris is ten miles in circumference, and cannot cover less surface of ground than Vienna or Berlin. Most of the houses have only one story, and consist of the same materials as those of Choi and Eriyan, contributing copious additions to the street dust, and to the number of ophthalmic patients. It is well known that the

Persian style of architecture never laid claim to grandeur, like that of the Egyptian, Byzantine, or even Turkish, as exemplified in the mosque of Suleimanieh. But in matters of decoration, the Persian style is often very graceful, and the arabesques that are preserved in some of the splendid palaces of Teheran and Shiraz, and even in a ruinous mosque at Tabris, can scarcely be equalled anywhere in the East; least of all at Constantinople, especially in the summer palace of the Sultan, on the Bosphorus, the interior decorations of which are as gaudy as they are tasteless. The fairy-like ornaments, and porcelain tiles of the Moorish palaces I saw in Algeria, are inferior to the Persian art in arabesques, painted garlands, and coloured decorations on the walls; and a Bavarian traveller has observed, that the mural arabesques in the public buildings at Munich, are very inferior to the admirable decorations in the old Sardar's palace at Eriwan, now the residence of a Russian colonel. Persian architecture, by no means, appears to the greatest advantage in the exterior of edifices. Persia cannot anywhere offer mosques that can be compared with the Moslem temples of Constantinople, Broussa, or Cairo. But in the inte-

rior, the most profuse decoration is commonly displayed; and even in the houses of Persians in indifferent circumstances, the rooms present walls with polished tiles, and almost every proprietor in good circumstances has a fruit or flower garden, or, at all events, a court with mulberry trees, under whose shade he can recline on a soft carpet, and enjoy the freshness of the air. The head of the house, after his repast, enjoys his kef, smoking his nargileh, sipping sherbet, listening to theplash of a murmuring fountain, gazing on the voluptuous evolutions of dancing slaves, or reclining, with locked doors, at the side of his favourite, attired in her seductive costume of gold embroidery and variegated silk; and, at length, overpowered by these combined influences, he lapses into that apathetic contemplation, the highest delight of the Oriental.

Whosoever has the good luck to be a hakhim, in high repute, like Dr. Cassolani, who is even admitted to make medical visits in the harems of the rich, otherwise closed to all males, save the lord of the house, enjoys many opportunities of gratifying his sight with the spectacle of Persian beauties. Frank ladies

are also admitted into their harems, in the most polite manner, by the Persian grandees. Unfortunately, these mysteries of Persian domestic life at Tabris, remained concealed from us, and I was obliged to rest satisfied with visits to the houses of some merchants, who lived in a plain manner. The walls of their rooms were of shining white, polished, and with frescoes or porcelain. The only luxuries consisted in the divans, the silk cushions and Oriental carpets covering the floor of the room. The hinder part of the house is commonly occupied by the harem. The gardens were neatly kept, presenting a fine display of roses, but no great variety of flowers. I was informed, however, by Dr. Cassolani and Mr. Bonham, who had frequently visited the palace, and even the harem of Behmen-Mirza, Sardar of Tabris, and brother of Mahomed-Shah, that the ornaments and plants were much more splendid and diversified. They represented that the taste of the Persian architects had created really beautiful effects at his residence, and that there was a display of marble and alabaster, of gilding, mosaic, arabesques, and even paintings on glass, that could not have been conceived, from the plain and un-

pretending exterior of the Sardar's palace. The egotistical Persians have withdrawn all beauties from the gaze of the street passenger, reserving them for the enjoyment of the privileged few, who hold high rank and appointments, or have obtained wealth, and occupy a position that renders them secure in the display of their luxury, at least, in the inside of their houses, without being exposed to the ruthless depredations of Viziers and *employés*. In walking through the streets, your eye caught sight of nothing but monotonous ash-grey walls, with a coating of Persian mud mortar, here and there surmounted by the green canopy of giant mulberry and palm trees.

Even the Persian fair, who flock through the streets in almost as great numbers as the men, and who are engaged in visiting baths and female friends, do not display, in the street, the variegated glories of silk and embroidery, with which they delight the eyes of their lords in the harem. They are dressed from head to foot in linen, muslin, or coarse cotton of a uniform colour, only admitting narrow slits for the eyes. The out-door costume of the Turkish and Armenian women at Stamboul,

and even of the Moorish women in Tunis and Algiers, would be regarded as highly indelicate, at Tabris. Notwithstanding their ponderous envelopes, the Moorish women of Barbary suffer their black, piercing eyes to have full play, besides the top of their brunette noses. The Turkish women of Constantinople go still farther, displaying not only their lustrous eyes, but the whole of their pretty nose, only concealing forehead, mouth and chin. Not only do they allow their eyes to wander freely over the magic scenery of the Bosphorus, but they are not very reluctant to display the charms of their features to the promenaders of the masculine gender, by the sweet waters, and under the shade of the palm trees. Nor are their dainty feet so carefully concealed within their slippers, and occasionally a respectable portion of an elegantly shaped leg, may be detected under the folds of the wide trousers. The Christian Armenian women, are almost more amiable and complaisant, in this respect, and display so much of their pretty faces, that you can obtain a tolerably correct notion of Armenian beauty, even in the streets of Pera, and without entering private houses. But in

Tabris a boundless field is left open for fancy. The hundred eyes of Argus, even if provided with a hundred Herschel's telescopes, could not decipher the charms and mysteries, buried under the Persian envelopes. Nothing is seen save mummy-like spectres, having nothing in common with humanity, and looking like so many walking sacks, to which some Persian enchanter had given a pair of feet.

The bazaar is the only place well adapted to the study of Persian life and manners. We ought rather to use the plural term, for the bazaar of Tabris, consists in reality of several bazaars, and forms a conglomerate of numerous halls full of shops. Domestic habits and religious ceremonies, are a sealed book to Europeans, but all public places of resort are thrown freely open to them. The spacious halls of the bazaar, are the centre of all life and movement, presenting a wonderful mixture of art, science, sensual enjoyments, luxury, and misery. I strolled daily through the bazaar, sometimes accompanied by my interpreter, sometimes alone. At first, Dr. Cassolani recommended me to make use of the services of one of his Persian servants, who knew how

to proceed, when the crowd surrounded me with their importunities. If the clamorous and obtrusive tradesmen, or the beggars and jugglers swarming round us, became troublesome, this man cleared a way through the throng, with his herculean arm, and made the most forward stand back, or draw off. Gradually the people became accustomed to my daily stroll, and I was allowed to make my observations in peace.

The first thing that struck me in the bazaar, was the immense accumulation of European goods, compared with those of Asiatic manufacture. More than three fourths of the contents of the shops, proceed from Europe, and chiefly from England. The best cottons and cutlery, were evidently British, whilst the coarser kinds came from Germany and Russia. Almost all the finer glassware, especially used for narghiles, and expressly adorned with fanciful designs, were of Austrian manufacture. The amber used for the mouthpieces of tchibouks throughout Asia, comes chiefly from the Baltic provinces of Prussia, but it is prepared for circulation at Constantinople. Some Bohemian glass blowers at Stamboul,

raised a formidable competition to this trade, by making yellow glass mouth-pieces, that were mistaken for amber. But their consumption was confined to the poorer classes.

The poorest articles on sale came from Bohemia, Saxony, and Russia. I saw a considerable quantity of Nuremberg toys, including watches, with representations of locomotives, and German inscriptions. Even the lithographs of Mahomed-Shah then ruler of Persia, had a German legend. On many coarsely made boxes coming from Astracan, might be seen uncouth likenesses of the Emperor Nicholas. Even the portraits of Benkendorf, Paskiewitsch, and other Russian Generals were offered for sale in the Armenian shops. Almost all the leather and coarse cloths, came from Russia, and the best sugar, (here in great request) from England.

Amongst the most beautiful and elegant Asiatic goods, the handsomest were from Hindoostan, including shawls, carpets and counterpanes. The shawls of less delicate texture, whose splendid colours betray the celebrated Persian taste for beautiful tints and elegant designs, proceed for the most part from the southern provinces of Persia.

Of all the Eastern provinces, Schiraz yields the most solid articles, including, especially, sword blades of remarkable beauty, and very high price. I was shown blades of splendid workmanship, into whose steel, ornaments and arabesques of gold, containing occasionally passages from the Koran, were inserted, and which were valued at 200 tomans, or Persian ducats. I admit that there was no great profusion of such articles in the bazaar of Tabris. For many of the opulent Persians, avoid purchasing them, in order not to betray their wealth, and many artizans avoid the manufacture of such articles, in order not to excite the covetousness of the Sardar, or of some Persian prince, who are often amateurs of curiosities, but seldom punctual paymasters.

Of these Persian weapons, it may be said, in general, that the intrinsic worth of the blade exceeds that of the decorations. Magnificent sheaths, splendid guards of gold, ivory, or precious stones, such as are encountered in the bazaars of Constantinople, Cairo, and Tiflis, as well as in the cities of Barbary, are not, at all, or rarely, in circulation in Persia. The chief attention of the Shiraz manufacturers

is directed to the blade, which is composed of a number of plates of steel, welded together when cold, and requiring a most practised and delicate hand. The artisans of Tabris, Teheran, and Ispahan, have not yet been able to rival the mechanics of Shiraz, who still enjoy the highest reputation in this branch of art. It is rare to meet with arms of other descriptions, such as Arabian yataghans, in Persia, where they seem not to be liked.

The workshops are more interesting than the show-rooms. All trades are carried on in this bazaar, from the coarsest to the finest. It is usual for kindred trades to associate together, and this regulation seems necessary, because some branches could not be carried on near the noisy trades, such as copper-mongers. Nevertheless, the continual cries, the buzz of conversation from the numerous groups, and the constant movement create a perpetual and considerable tumult. I admired particularly the great precision and wonderful strength displayed by the smiths in their strokes. In one workshop, seven men were hammering at copper balances; and Vulcan himself would have

smiled approvingly at the dexterity of these brawny Cyclops of the Persian land of fire.

As a contrast to the latter we may notice the Persian public letter-writers, whom I had already seen in the bazaar of Choi. They carry on almost the same business as the *écrivains publics* of the large towns of France, nor are they better housed or more respected. Any one who wishes to send a petition to a great man, or a man in office (love-letters are at a discount in Persia), and is ignorant of writing, resorts to one of these public quill-drivers. They also draw up talismans and amulets, consisting of extracts from the Koran, written on parchment, in a very superior style of handwriting, decidedly equal to anything we can produce.

Even public schools are situated between these workshops and show-rooms. The Mollah generally instructs his pupils with open doors, and the school-rooms are filled with a hum, reminding you of a swarm of bees. I entered one of these rooms unceremoniously, and saluted the schoolmaster Mollah, who wore a white turban, instead of the usual black kalpak; and he invited me most civilly to sit down beside

him. His pupils, about sixty in number, sat on the carpet, forming an irregular half circle round the Mollah. The majority were boys of ten to twelve years; but there were a few big lads of seventeen to eighteen, who already boasted some respectable mustachios; and all came from the country. The scholars read together, half aloud; but they chatted together quite unreservedly, ran about to each other, exchanged places, and appeared to have no idea of the order and discipline of our European schools. Besides the general reading that was going on, the Mollah carried on individual exercises, calling the youths to him separately, who were obliged to read their manuscripts to him with a perpetual nodding of the head. The very neatly-written leaves of paper handed to his pupils by the master, contained verses of Hafiz and Firdousi, which were read as easily by these humble youths as by the most learned professor at a German university. Turkish writing and books are not read in the schools of the Persians; indeed few of them seem to know how to read and write Turkish, though the common people speak a corrupt Turkish throughout Aserbeidschan. The usual sum paid for schooling to the Mollah,

is one sahebgeran (ten pence) a month for the wealthier pupils, and an abbas (five pence) for the poor. Besides these, extra presents are made; thus one of the boys gave the master, in my presence, a dozen fine apples.

Musicians, jugglers, conjurors, and story-tellers, contribute not a little to increase the life and animation of the bazaars. There can be no doubt that the bazaar of Constantinople is much more spacious, and has a much more diversified and splendid display of merchandize; but it does not offer the picturesque appearance of that of Tabris, and is much more tranquil and tedious. The jugglers did not exhibit any of the wonders recorded of their craft in India. Nothing that I saw of their performances exceeded the dexterity of our "wizards." Story-tellers in the costume of Dervishes found a ready audience; their narration was animated and impassioned; and they tried to increase the effect of their tale, by mimicry of voice and gesture. In other respects, everything went on much as in the fairs of Germany, and the sea-ports of Italy. All wished to hear and see, and no one to pay; and the collection of performers was commonly very meagre. Musicians commonly took up

their station in the market-place, near the bazaar. When I approached one of these stationary bands, the curious crowd readily made way for me. Two of the musicians put down their instruments, made me a low bow, and, without being asked, but probably in anticipation of a handsome reward, they proceeded to display some grotesque and obscene dances. The dress of the Feringhees is generally more respected in the east, than the kaftan of the Oriental. The crowd show their esteem for them, but make the Feringhees pay three times as much as natives for every complaisance.

The European society of Tabris is almost confined to the members of the Russian and British consulates, and to a few Greek merchants, who have monopolized the European-Persian trade. The British Consul lives rather retired, in the enjoyment of the society of his charming wife. His national shyness, or domestic habits, make him rather unsociable, and the cause is attributed to British egotism. The gentlemen of the Russian embassy were much more amiable, and did all in their power to enliven the European circle, by their courtesy and kindness, as well as good cheer, and thus

to secure some entertainment in this place, which is a very dull residence, notwithstanding its population and bustle.

The same remark applies to the Greek merchants. Through the introduction of friends, I was admitted into their agreeable and exclusive society, for the Europeans of Tabris are rather shy of Frank strangers, and make all sorts of inquiries about their antecedents, ere they admit them into their circle. Russians, English and French are rather common visitors, Germans are rarely seen. The day before my arrival, an Italian, called Foresti, had appeared, who passed for a doctor, and had a seat at the table of M. Morfopulo, the head Greek. This self-styled doctor had been long known in Asiatic Turkey as a quack, as I learnt at Erzeroum, and knowing different languages, he had deceived and overreached different pachas, had prescribed them wonderful cures for all evils, in consideration of a good fee, whilst on other occasions, he had affected a knowledge of mining operations, and promised them fine veins of gold and silver. At length, the quack was unmasked everywhere, and even the heroic stomachs of the mountain Koord Beys could

not endure any longer the violent operation of Foresti's drugs. Kicked out of the door everywhere, he had now come to seek his fortune in Persia. When I came back to Tabris, after a trip to the hills, he had a good practice, consisting mostly of incurables, cast off by Dr. Cassolani, and Foresti thought Persia a fair field for operations, though he allowed that the greedy Persians, including sardar and grandees, were very reluctant to pay.

A dinner at the house of M. Morfopulo, gave me a good insight into the luxurious style of living adopted by Europeans at Tabris. Asiatic delicacies presented a contrast with European dainties. Fish from the Caspian Sea, game from the forests of Gilan, grapes and mulberries from Aserbeidschan, the most delicate pasties, coloured jellies, and iced Cliquot champagne of the best quality, graced the board. The conversation was very entertaining. Amongst the company was a young Greek, M. Mavrocordato, a relation of the celebrated minister of Athens, a man of the most refined French manners, dressed in an elegant French dress-coat, with yellow gloves, and fresh from Paris and its gaieties.

I had a good deal of conversation with old Morfopulo about commercial matters. The trade through Tabris to Central Asia has decreased for some years, but the smuggling trade with Russian Armenia was immensely on the increase, and the profits of the Greek houses were at that time enormous, though subject to fluctuations, owing to political accidents, wars, &c.

The domestic position of the European residents is not without interest. Some of these Greeks were married men, but had left their wives behind at Constantinople. Most of the members of the Russian embassy had also come here as bachelors. In both cases, the new comers had followed a long established practice of Europeans in Persia, and contracted temporary marriages with Nestorian women. The Christian sect of the Nestorians, which is even more numerous than the Gregorian-Armenian, in Aserbeidschan, has a remarkable partiality for Europeans, and its members have not the least scruple, on religious, national, or ethical grounds, to give their daughters in marriage to Europeans, for a limited period, (be it six years or six months,) and for a

stipulated sum. The affair is generally arranged in the most regular and formal manner, always in the presence of the parents and the nearest relations of the girl, and often under the sanction of a Nestorian priest, acting, perhaps, as notary. In fact, there is a complete competition for the preference of every newly arrived European, who is supposed to be about to take up his residence for some time in the country. The wealthiest strangers have naturally the best selection. As soon as they have agreed about the duration, and the terms of these *matrimonie alla carta*, the bride is brought to her husband with due ceremony, by her relations. It is usual for the family of the lady to take up their residence in the house of her temporary lord, who must naturally maintain them all. This arrangement is often expressly stated in the marriage settlement. Not only all the Greek merchants, but most of the members of the Russian General Consulate, were married in this manner, and the practice is so usual and long established, that public morality is not at all shocked at it. The persons concerned ask each other, without the least embarrassment, how their

wives and children are. Each of these gentlemen had set apart a portion of his house for the women, and called it the harem. The ladies retained the mode of life, and costume of native females, covered their faces when strangers appeared, kept away from table when guests were invited, filled up their leisure hours like Turkish women, with devotion to the toilette, and visiting the baths, and when they went abroad, appeared like the other women, in long envelopes, extending from head to foot.

It cannot be disputed that these females are faithful and affectionate to their children, but being totally deficient in cultivation and refinement, notwithstanding their beauty, they cannot compensate for the life of intelligent female society, in Europe. It was evident, from the regrets expressed by the gentlemen, for the tender reminiscences in the West, that these Perso-Frankish weddings did not satisfy the affections and the imagination. Young M. Mavrocordato longed for Parisian grisettes, M. Osserof, for the refined females of the Pittsburgh salons. The physical beauty of these Nestorian

women, which is quite undeniable, was lost sight of, in comparison with the delicacy and spiritual refinement of the cultivated class of European women.

So soon as the interval, specified in the contract, has elapsed, another agreement is made, unless the gentleman is tired of his partner, when he forms a new one. The deserted lady is sure of a settlement at home, because she brings a good sum with her, whereas most Nestorians have to pay dearly in purchasing a wife. The children, the fruit of these short-lived marriages, almost invariably follow their mothers, and I was told that the Nestorian females love them almost more than those born in subsequent alliances. The step-fathers are, also, said to treat them very kindly. Nor is it less remarkable, that the European fathers are said to feel no scruple in abandoning their offspring, without taking a farther thought about their destiny. A long residence in the East appears to blunt the sense of duty, honour and affection, even in the most upright characters.

My time at Tabris was not so much devoted

to running about the streets, as to intercourse with men familiar with Persian life. I was especially indebted for much useful information to Messrs. Bonham and Osserof, who had resided a long time in the country, and were thoroughly versed in its political state. Combining their accounts with other information received on sundry occasions, relating to modern transactions in Persia, I purpose to present the reader with the fruit of my experience, supported by the testimony of the most able British residents and travellers, the whole digested by the eminent Professor Ritter of Berlin.

CHAPTER V.

Modern Politics of Persia—Tabris—Its Vicissitudes—State of Persia under Feth-Ali-Shah and Abbas Mirza—Results of Conversations about Mohammed Shah—Hussein Khan's Mission to France—French Drill Inspectors—Count of Damas—Characteristics of Mohammed Shah and Hadschi-Mirza-Agassi—The Emperor Nicholas and the Persian Crown Prince—Domestic Scenes—The Russians and their Policy—The English and the French in Persia.

TABRIS or Tauris, was founded by the Armenian King Khosreu, a zealous fire-worshipper, in the first half of the third century. It is evident that we cannot introduce a detailed chronicle of this remarkable city, which has suffered frequent and remarkable vicissitudes, but we may add that its founder and etymology have been matters of dispute, and that the early Arabian geographers devote a considerable share of attention to the city.

It was destroyed in 858 and 1042, by earthquakes, restored under the Moguls, and almost ruined by the Sultan, Amurath IV. In 1673, when visited by Chardin, it had recovered most of its splendour, and was reported to contain 15,000 houses, 15,000 shops, 300 caravanserais, 250 mosques, and 550,000 inhabitants. These numbers appear rather fabulous, and, at all events, the city seems to have been greatly reduced by the end of the eighteenth century. Two terrible earthquakes in 1727 and 1780, contributed in producing this decay. The former of these catastrophes is said to have destroyed 70,000, the latter, 40,000 persons in Tabris alone. Earthquakes are still felt there frequently, the whole country is most volcanic, and it is probable that future convulsions are in store for that city.

At the beginning of the present century, Tabris appears to have been at a very low ebb, only containing dilapidated houses and 30,000 inhabitants, according to Kinneir. Some years later, it appears to have made a sudden leap, and it was found by Morier and Ouseley to present a promising appearance, with a strong citadel. Ark Ali Shah, was restored as a residence by the

young Persian Crown Prince, Abbas Mirza, who had established an arsenal, and a cannon foundry there. The modern development and prosperity of the capital of Aserbeidschan, is so intimately blended with the history of that promising Persian, who died too early for the good of his country, without being able to mature the enlarged projects of reform which he had commenced ; that we cannot avoid giving a sketch of his life and character, extracted from the best accounts of English travellers. Nor could recent political events in Persia, on which we purpose to dwell, be comprehensible to our readers, without this retrospective glance at modern Persian history. In presenting this sketch, we shall draw largely from the excellent digests of these transactions contained in the works of Professor Carl Ritter.

Morier informs us that it was a most singular spectacle to witness the attempt to introduce European customs and discipline into Iran, in opposition to deeply-rooted prejudices and fatalism. Nadir Shah had succeeded in effecting great conquests with undisciplined hordes, but they were swarms of robbers, and their neighbours were equally undisciplined. There was no

obstacle in Persia comparable to the Janissaries of Turkey, but the contempt of the Court, Princes, Grandees, and people, had to be overcome. Abbas Mirza was the soul and centre of the reform movement, which had been promoted by General Gardanne, and the emissaries of Napoleon, and had been supported by French and Russian deserters. He was convinced that it was only by organising an effectual artillery force, that Persia could hope to make an effectual resistance to Russia, her dangerous and disciplined neighbour, all previous attempts against disciplined troops having been unsuccessful. His exertions met with an energetic and useful support, as long as the border province was exposed to danger, and was under his administration; but when, in the course of time, the Persians became disgusted and the Prince tried to soothe them by a premature application of his new system, it fell into a state of impotence.

The death of the Shah, and of the prince, which followed in speedy succession, were heavy blows to the reforms; and the Europeans who introduced them, notwithstanding their valuable support in consolidating the power of the new

Shah, could not reckon on much zeal on his part.

Abbas Mirza, to break the intense hatred of Persians to all coming from the Feringhi, determined to become a recruit, and place himself in the hands of French and Russian drill-masters, to wear a uniform and serve as a model to his people. He began the drill with twenty or thirty men, in a private court of his palace, that he might not excite ridicule. After he had put himself at their head, and risen to the command of his squad, he issued orders to the nobles to carry the musket, as he had done. As there was a want of native officers, he gave, at first, the command of large detachments to the French officers who had accompanied General Gardanne, and hoped, by this plan, to make rapid advances.

The policy of England speedily detected the plan of the French, and the influence of Sir Hartford Jones and General Malcolm soon succeeded in expelling their rivals from the Persian council; but they continued the discipline, only placing British officers in the place of the French. Abbas Mirza forced his countrymen to follow in his track, by his youthful

enthusiasm, and because he was the first and bravest in all exertions and battles. When the French had been entirely expelled by British influence, Abbas devoted his attention, with the aid of the British Mission, to the formation of an efficient artillery, under the care of Lieutenant Lindsay, of the Madras Presidency, whilst Major Christie received the command of the infantry, or *Serbaz*, whose pith consisted, at first, of Russian deserters. The Prince was exposed to the charge of undermining Islam with his Nizam (by cutting off the beards, &c.), and to the wrath of his own brother, Ali Mirza, as well as to the suspicions of other Persians ; but the Iliyat, taken from the wandering tribes of Aserbeidschan became gradually well disciplined and organized. These men were very docile, and capital raw material for soldiers, but the Persian officers made great impediments. Nor could anything have overcome all these obstacles, but the youth, winning character, noble bearing, and personal bravery of Abbas Mirza, coupled with the dangerous attitude of Russia. The Prince was a man full of *naïveté* and humour, extremely anxious for information, nor without perseverance, studious, master of the English

and French tongues, encompassed by a library and a collection of maps, drawn up by his staff, under the supervision of Colonel Monteith—in short, endowed with so many rare qualities, he was one of the most remarkable appearances in the history of Tabris.

Joubert informs us that, although he was far from invariably successful in the defence of his frontier, on the side of Georgia, yet he soon showed the Russians that he was no contemptible or barbarian enemy; he had always opposed his antagonists with determined spirit, but he invariably displayed magnanimity to his prisoners. Feth Ali, the Shah of Persia, had been proud of the talents, but mistrustful of the undertakings of his successor. But, when he witnessed the first review of the well-disciplined troops, he was delighted at the orderly bearing of his rough nomads, whose wild independence had given him so much trouble, and who now appeared broken into the strictest military discipline; and he fancied himself to be suddenly surrounded by a well-organized army, instead of wild barbarians. This impression was very favourable to the establishment of the new reforms, which, if they had been steadily and

seriously pursued, would have brought in their train industry, commerce, manufactures, education, and the other branches of civilization.

Ker Porter, who had shown much attention to the envoy of Abbas Mirza in England, Abul-Hassan-Khan, had been invited as a guest by the Prince, and had paid him a visit in 1819. It was the opinion of this Englishman, that if Abbas came to the throne, European laws and justice would become rooted in Persia. It has turned out otherwise, nor does the ground appear yet prepared for this; something more was wanted than the young European school at Tabris. The sanguine hopes founded on the youthful Crown Prince were not always realized in his riper years. B. Fraser, for example, who was a shrewd judge, found much to blame in him, in 1822. He thought that his European taste was rather a love of novelty than deep statesmanship. He represents his courage as much over-rated, that he was very open to flattery, full of vanity and caprice, and being surrounded by evil counsellors, his undertakings had failed, nor had he ever really made himself popular.

The arsenal at Tabris was, at that time, admirably managed by Mr. Armstrong, and the foundries yielded fire-arms. A number of Persian physicians and surgeons, who had studied in England, at the expense of the Prince, had received appointments at the Court, and in the army. A printing-office was in the course of being established, but the new paper-manufactories were as yet inefficient. The first mines that were opened in the Kofian-Koh were failures, but other subsequent attempts were more successful, in the west of Ahar. When, however, the management of the arsenal passed into the hands of Persians, everything went back, the old disorder returned, the magazines were not filled, money was misappropriated, the factories gave small returns, and the avarice of the Kadjars kept back every penny. The *employés* and troops scarcely received any pay, and the soldiers ran away home during the Turkish incursions.

Nevertheless, the long duration of peace, under Feth-Ali-Shah, did much to forward the increase of population and of prosperity, as well as the humanizing of the rising generation in Persia. But the want of internal ad-

ministration still continued ; the avarice of the Kadjar dynasty, the caprice and internal dissensions of the princes, who received all the appointments as governors of provinces, and the universal corruption of the *employés*, prevented even in Aserbeidschan, that progress which its situation and condition might have secured. At that period, (1819), besides Abbas Mirza in Aserbeidschan, nine of his brothers resided as governors in the principal provinces of the kingdom, and each of them, with his regal display, treasury and troops, were quite sovereigns in their own country. But, besides these vice-roys, the Sháh had no fewer than thirty-nine sons, and many of the husbands of his one hundred and forty daughters, received or expected appointments. This state of things, of itself, sufficed to prevent any great influence of the Crown Prince beyond his own province ; and, moreover, to fleece the whole country, to impoverish the treasury, and bring all the relations of the Shah into disorder. If we add to this the uncertain state of the revenue, which is based on tribute in kind, contributions of raw material, and presents of all kinds, and that the receipts in money must be very trifling, where the greatest

amount of the sum squeezed from the people is retained by these vampires, we shall understand how the luxury and avarice of the authorities must still be great impediments to all reforms.

The relative position of the frontier provinces explained their mutual influence and condition. Thus the political and mercantile relations of Aserbeidschan with Erzeroum and Russia, explains its peculiar features. For, without this connection, its early attempts at Europeanizing would not have taken place. Its locality brought the East into early intercourse with the West at Tabris.

After the war, between the Russians and Persians, had been commanded by Abbas Mirza, the peace on the Araxes was settled by the mediation of Sir Gore Ouseley, at that time British Envoy to Persia. J. Morier's account of that period gives us an insight into the course of these proceedings, in which he shared actively himself. It appears, that the Shah moved with his whole court, from his residence to Aserbeidschan. The country is always obliged to bear the cost of every journey of the Shah, as well as of his princes, troops, couriers, and guests (*Mehmans*), *i. e.* of his whole suite.

Each of the poorest Turcoman nomads was, and is, expected to fill the magazines with his crops ; and the best produce of the land, including the finest flour, barley, straw, cattle, game, meat, fruit, etc. was always reserved for the Shah.

The Shah met with a solemn reception in the plain of Oujan, on the borders of Aserbeidschan, where Abbas Mirza had done everything in his power to surprise his royal father with the progress made by his Government in Europeanizing. In making the Istakkali, *i. e.* the first salutation, the prince threw himself at the feet of the royal horse, and kissed the earth (like Absolom kneeling to David, 2 Sam. xiv. 33), as sign of subjection and obedience. He then proceeded on foot, with a musket over his shoulder, before the horse of the Shah, and only mounted his own when the sovereign ordered him. The latter was then received with evolutions by the disciplined troops, with Turkish music, &c., in order to revive a warlike spirit in him, in spite of the heavy expenses of the war. A temporary palace had been erected on an artificial Tepé, to command a view of the extensive plain, and contained an audience chamber, reception rooms,

(anderun), a harem, &c., resting on gilded pillars, glittering with mirrors and crystals, decorated with paintings, and provided with an upper story, or bala-khaneh, and constituting the private apartments of the Shah, where he could breathe the fresh air, and overlook the vast extent of the encampment, decorating the landscape to an immense distance with its gay pavillions and banners of all colours. The doors of all the thousands of marquees were turned facing the Shah's palace, to enable their occupants to perform the ceremony of *serferan*, or bowing to the king's seat. The royal princes in their *serperdehs*, the viziers and superior officers in similar tents, were grouped around with their suite, surrounded by equal pomp. The corps of troops of each tribe formed separate divisions, such as those of the Bakh-tiaris, the Afschars, the Irakis, the Shahipesend, &c., and were placed according to lot. "Nevertheless," says Morier, "a delightful Oriental confusion prevailed on all hands, men and cattle, tents and shops, hot baths and provisions, luxuries, and twelve unserviceable cannon, being heaped together in disorder. The Shah was accompanied by his harem, as in the time of

Darius, and every officer of rank had hot baths at hand. The consumption of from eighty thousand to ninety thousand men, of whom half were cavalry, was incalculable, and scarcity soon made itself felt in this crowd, merely gathered together to conclude a peace. After many conferences, and much loss of time, owing to squabbles of etiquette about precedence, it was agreed that, instead of written communications, the treaty should be concluded by oral intercourse between commissioners, and a convent at Gulistan, in Karendag, was appointed as the place of meeting. The agents were to be on the part of Russia, the Governor-general of Georgia, and on that of Persia, Mirza-Abul-Hassan-Khan."

Thus, at length, the treaty of 1813 was concluded, determining the frontiers of Russian Trans-Caucasia and Persia, which have only been slightly modified since. The principal border line is formed, to the northward, by the south bank of the Araxes, from Nackhitschewan, and Erivan to the north-west, whilst, to the west, it is formed by the mountain line running direct south from Ararat, and the water-shed of the tract of country between the Lakes Urmia

and Van, down to the southern Taurus, towards the Turkish Pachaliks of Bajasid, Musch, Van, and Mosul. By this means, the political outline of Aserbeidschan is intercalated as a wedge to the north-west, between Russia and Turkey, and forms the northern point of Persia, where the mighty Ararat stands enthroned, as the land-mark of three rival empires.

The exact details of this demarcation, did not appear in the maps of Monteith and Sutherland, but are thus summed up by Morier. The boundary begins on the Caspian Sea, to the north of Astara, and to the south of the Russian port of Lankaran, in the plain of Adineh bazaar. It runs thence to the Schindan mountains, and thence along the coast ridge, to the northwards (by Oujarud), and direct from Balarud north-west through the Sahara or Desert of Moghan, to the Aras (Araxes), at Yedibaluk, a little above its confluence with the Kur.

From thence it had been determined, that the border line should run along the entire south bank of the Araxes, to the

north-west, as far as its confluence with the Kapanek-tschai, behind Mount Megri. From the right bank of the latter river, the frontier of Karabag and Nackhitschewan was carried to the north of the Araxes, over the summit of the Pembek and Aligez, thence to the angle of the frontier of Shuragil, passing over the snowy mountains through Akad, and subsequently along the border of Shuragil, and between the village of Misteri, to the Arpatschai, the left tributary of the Araxes. But the latter demarcation has been subsequently modified, by the second Russian war (1826), and the western portion of this territory, at that time (1813) belonging to Persia, has been incorporated in the Russian province of Erivan, so that the frontier now runs along the south bank of the Araxes, as far as the meridian of Erivan, and then climbs along Ararat in a south-west direction.

By means of this district being handed over to Russia, she has obtained the command of all the passes into Aserbeidschan, on the northern border of Persia, to the west of the Caspian Sea, so that it remains at her option

to settle all disputes arising at Teheran, on every new accession to the throne. It was unavoidable that Russian influence at the Court of Persia should increase, after this change, especially after the Governor-general of Georgia had succeeded in establishing a friendly intercourse with the Turcoman tribes, to the east of the Caspian, whose territory commands both Bucharias. By this means, both shores of the Caspian, with their ports, were thrown open to Russian trade and navigation; and Astrahcan, the mouths of [the Kur and the port of Lankaran, were likely to grow in importance, by becoming the emporia of a direct trade to Persia, India and China. Not only Russia, but Persia also profited largely by this increase in trade, resulting from the change in the frontier. Trade has been greatly on the increase ever since, and has led to the necessity of a Russian Resident at Teheran. In 1819, Persia forwarded her silks, cottons, &c., to Tiflis and Astrachan, and thence into the heart of Muscovy, whilst Russia made a return of cloth, leather, glass and paper.

In 1834, Fraser remarked, that owing to

this trade, Tabris was almost the only flourishing town in the empire. Whilst the others were depopulated and ruinous, that city was in a most thriving state. He did not attribute this to an improvement in the administration ; for whatever Abbas Mirza may have done in the way of reform, neither he nor any other Persian ruler have thought much of the condition of the people. There may have been less oppression, because he himself shared more than was customary, in the administration, but every village was taxed to the utmost, and when he left his government to help in conquering Khorasan, Aserbeidschan fell back sadly, under the tyranny of his brother.

Nor were the relations with Turkey, calculated to promote its interests. When J. B. Fraser was in Tabris in 1822, Abbas Mirza had a feud with his Turkish neighbour to the west, and the Scotch traveller gives us a good insight into the petty Persian politics of the day, only concerned with more local considerations. A relation of the Pacha of Bagdad, persecuted by his government, had fled twice to Tabris and Persia for refuge. The first time he had been escorted back with a letter

from the Shah, and had received the Sultan's pardon. But the second time, he was followed by the Turks, and kidnapped over the border, together with some officers of Abbas Mirza. He was dragged off to Tokat, and beheaded ; nor was this all, for some Persian pilgrims to Mecca (Shiites), were reported to have been insulted by Turks, on the road to Damascus, and even some women of the Shah and nobles had been ill-used ; not even the sanctity of the tent having been respected. Abbas Mirza was roused by this, and also by jealousy of his brother Mohammed Ali Mirza, Governor of Kermanschah, who had increased his power by a quarrel with the Osmanlis of Bagdad. Prompted by these motives, without any notice, he crossed the frontier of Turkey (1821), and attacked Bajasid. One of his generals even laid waste the country about Diarbekir. I admit, that he was recalled and treacherously murdered, but the Porte was not deceived, and seized on all Persian property and merchants in Turkey, by way of reprisals. Abbas Mirza then advanced over the frontier with 40,000 men, but he wanted money, and the support of the Shah.

The Turkish army attacked Topra-Kaleh, by Lake Van, then in the hands of the Persians. Abbas Mirza concentrated his power about Choi, and marched against the enemy. A battle ensued, and the Turks were defeated. The Prince pursued them to the Pass of Deear, three days' march from Topra-Kaleh. At that place, the cholera broke out in the army, one-tenth of its members fell victims, Abbas retired, and the campaign was over. The whole force suddenly dissolved. The expedition was fruitless, but it brought back the cholera, which visited Tabris, and in July, swept off fifteen to twenty persons daily. The plague has often been as great a scourge in Persia, as its Governors.

The treaty of peace, soon after concluded between the two weakened empires, brought little advantage to Abbas. The borders of the countries remained the same as before, the Koordish interlopers were to be mutually handed over, and the Pachas of Erzeroum were not to be so frequently changed, which had previously led to misunderstandings.

So long as Abbas Mirza remained at Tabris,

his presence was advantageous to the prosperity of that city; but his influence was less beneficial in his latter years, when his attention was directed to the conquest of Khorasan. Since the death of Nadir Shah, down to the Kadjar dynasty, all Persian monarchs had resigned their claims to that country, because it was ruled by a small independent Afghan dynasty, of the family of Nadir Shah. When these grand-children of Nadir had been driven out of Kabulistan, by the Afghan king, Ahmed Shah, they obtained an asylum in Herat and Mesched. It is true, that the Persian Shah, to restore his authority there, appointed one of his sons, Hassan-Ali-Mirza, governor of Khorasan; but his influence remained nugatory till the victories of the heir apparent, Abbas Mirza, over the Koordish chiefs of that province (1831—32). It was only after that date, that the Persian government entertained the serious thought of recovering Khorasan, the eastern provinces of the empire, and especially Herat, the centre of trade with India and Bokhara. Hassan Ali, Governor of Khorasan, married a princess of Kamran, Prince of Herat, hoping by violence or stratagem, to obtain easy posses-

sion of that place; but Feth-Ali-Shah did not favour these projects of his son. When Alexander Burnes passed through Mesched, 1832, he met there young Khosru Mirza, son of Abbas Mirza, and Governor of the town, surrounded by British officers, who were organizing his army. Feth-Ali-Shah also refused to support Abbas Mirza in his attempt against Herat. He knew the danger of extending the limits of his empire to those hostile clans and sects, and preferred to remain in alliance with Herat, and to leave it as an independent vanguard of his East provinces, towards the turbulent Afghan tribes, and the Indian States.

But the influence of Abbas Mirza prevailed over that of his father, and in 1833, he sent his eldest son, Mohammed Mirza, afterwards Shah, with an army to the conquest of Herat. The campaign was a failure. Abbas died during the seige; the army was obliged to retire; Mohammed Mirza returned in June, 1834, to the court of his sick grandfather, but hastened thence, to occupy the government of his father in Aserbeidschan, whither he was accompanied by the English Mission, and all its influence. Feth-Ali-Shah died the following

autumn, at Ispahan, during an expedition that he had undertaken against his rebellious son, the Governor of Ispahan and Shiraz. The Shah had reigned forty years, and died in the eightieth lunar year of his life, October 23rd, 1834.

The great confusion invariably resulting from a change of ruler in Persia, was repeated on the present occasion; and the accession of the legitimate successor, without bloodshed, was due exclusively to the influence of the better organized government and troops of Aserbeidschan, as well as to the united interference of the Russian and British Missions. Tabris exerted, at that period, this beneficial influence on the destiny of Persia, when the young Shah, Mohammed, after lingering in that city till he secured the co-operation of the British officers commanding the army, and provided for the payment of his troops with British subsidies, ultimately left the seat of his former government, and marched victoriously with his troops to Teheran, which he entered, January 2nd, 1835, and where he was soon after crowned.

We have thought it expedient to dwell on this portion of modern Persian history, from

its intimate connection with the state of cultivation introduced at Tabris and in Aserbeidschan. But we shall, henceforth, confine our attention chiefly to the statements of the most competent authorities, relating to Tabris and its government; and we possess an amount of valuable matter on this topic, from the most various and satisfactory sources, exceeding, perhaps, any mass of information imparted of late years with reference to the East.

The series of remarkable men to whom we are indebted for this information, begins with the celebrated African traveller, Browne, who appears to have been murdered probably at the instigation of the Shah, who was very suspicious of British interference, or even inquiries. Hence, it required all the well-known energy of J. B. Frazer, to enable him to travel through Khorasan. The first successor of Browne, was a Christian missionary, Martyns, who exerted considerable influence among the Persians, but died prematurely, in 1822. Nor has he met with imitators as fortunate. His successful conflicts with Persian bigotry and scepticism resulted from his deep conviction of the solemnity of his Apostolic office, from his perfect knowledge

of the Persian, in which he made an admirable translation of the New Testament ; and from his really exemplary life, which could not be denied by the Persians themselves, who used to call him by the beautiful name of Merdi Khodai, *i. e.*, ‘the man of God.’ He was met at Tabris, in 1811, by the British Mission, consisting of Sir Gore Ouseley, his brother the Orientalist, William Ouseley, and his secretary of embassy, J. Morier, who has added so much to our knowledge of Persia. The missionary died at Tokat, on a journey to the Armenian patriarch, at Etchmiazin. He left behind him, at Tabris, his written controversies with the Mollahs, and challenged them to reply. But this was not done, because they were not capable of doing so. Even the most learned Mollahs of Kerbelah could do nothing, though supported by Mirza Buzurg, Prime Minister of Abbas Mirza. It was at this period, that Captain Monteith, of the Madras Engineers, and Snodgrass, of the Bombay army, began their astronomical observations, subsequently completing a survey of the whole country, under the sanction of the Government of British India.

The military department at Tabris was under the direction of Major D'Arcy Todd, to whom we are indebted for a survey of roads and distances in Aserbeidschan. The British Majors, Stone, Christie, Lindsay, G. Willock, and the Surgeon Campbell, some of whom showed themselves, afterwards, to be very active men, had appointments there at the time of Ouseley's attempts at pacific mediation, besides the Russian commissaries, Colonel Papœuf, and the Imperial Councillor Von Freygang.

On Ker Porter's journey back through Tabris, (summer of 1819) he found a considerable gathering of European talent, combining in the work of reform, and he anticipated great things from this, and from the amiable, graceful character of the heir apparent. In opposition to the policy of France (once powerful in Persia) which consisted in preparing a high road to India, that of England was directed to keeping Persia in *statu quo*, to strengthen and manage it, so as to make it a vanguard, and an insurmountable bulwark to her Indian possessions. To this end, England, at that time, not only forwarded the organization of the infantry and artillery, but contributed large subsidies, sent

with General J. Malcolm, on three successive occasions, within fifteen years, three separate missions, and a large body of British officers from India, who travelled through, and reconnoitred the whole country, and the result of whose labours are contained in the elaborate publications of the General, on Persia. Many officers and volunteers of the Anglo-British army were sent to Persia, to instruct the troops in the exercise and tactics, and many hundreds of artizans and tradesmen of all kinds were sent there to advance the equipment of the army, artillery and fortresses in the European fashion.

Tabris remained the focus of all this activity, especially as the aged Feth-Ali-Shah, in the latter part of his reign, handed over the Foreign Department exclusively to his Heir Apparent, at Tabris. This reform had been a great undertaking, the labour had been great, and the result was comparatively successful, for the bravest Persian troops, who fought previously like wild animals, without any regularity, and though men of remarkable gallantry, had often turned the back to an inferior disciplined enemy, were now a serviceable corps. But the greatest difficulties

had to be encountered in the feudal system, the nomadic life and family organization of the clans under their own chieftains, with different uniforms, and without commissariat, or regular pay.

The population of Persia was estimated at twelve million souls, and its income at three and a half million tomans, *i. e.*, two million pounds sterling, and the armament of men capable of bearing arms, was reckoned at two hundred and fifty thousand, chiefly cavalry, divided into districts, according to tribes, which being distributed among native chiefs, could never act in unison.

Of these troops, on the old footing, besides two thousand cavalry, consisting of the sons of nobles, in immediate attendance on the Shah, and ten thousand cavalry, there were twelve thousand infantry, called the Djan Baze, forming a regular standing army. The latter force, since the time of Abbas, has received some organization by Europeans, and might be compared to the Janissaries, under Selim; they wore a uniform, and were useful in quelling insurrections.

But instead of this uncertain power, the

Kadjars after 1819, laid the basis of a more reliable support for the throne. Under the care of Colonel D'Arcy, of the Royal Artillery, and of Major Lindsay, of the Madras establishment, six troops of artillery were organized, each with six cannon and howitzers. The cavalry, which were trained as lancers, by Colonel Drouville and Lieutenant Willock, did not succeed so well. By these means, a body of eleven to twelve thousand men, far from contemptible for the East, had been already formed, and might have been increased to fifty thousand, to the great advantage of Persia. But the energies began gradually to exhaust themselves, and all the British officers left, without our knowing the cause, save Commander Hart, who remained with the infantry.

This Captain Hart, was then Commander of the Life Guards of the Crown Prince (1824), whilst Dr. McNeill, and, afterwards, Dr. Cormick were his physicians. Major Bacon, Captains Rich and Wilbraham were at Tauris, on a journey, at that time, besides the Russian chargé-d'affaires, Colonel Mazerowitch, so that at a dinner party at Tabris, given about that period, was congregated the strangest

medley of nationalities, amounting to twenty. Subsequent to this time, the German Professor Schulz, staid at Tabris eight months, in 1829 ; the German missionary, Hörnle, was there in 1831, carrying on researches among the Koords, and since 1830, a Protestant Mission has been founded among the Nestorians, by Eli Smith and Dwight, and removed to Urmia (1831) under Mr. Perkins and Dr. Grant.

Colonel J. Macdonald Kinneir, since 1826 Political Resident at the Court of the Shah, and the mediator of the peace with Russia in 1826, died at Tabris in 1831. He was succeeded by the brothers Willock, and Sir H. Willock, as Residents. E. Smith's very candid verdict on the character of Abbas, and the state of Tabris, was made during this later and weaker phase in the life of the Prince. Even this rigid course was attracted by the dazzling qualities of the Prince ; but his fame, and the hopes of the regeneration of Persia, that had been founded on him, were exaggerated. He was still, indeed, the patron of Europeans, and the pillar of reform ; he was tolerant to all religions ; but his effeminate mode of life, like that of all Persian nobles, had greatly debilitated and stained his

character ; he had become a hard drinker, a miser, and was prone to duplicity, he grasped greedily at everything, and ruled by caprice, like his predecessors. Nevertheless, he respected the property of strangers more than the former Governors had done ; he kept under the Koords, but justice was purchaseable, most public appointments were given to the highest bidders, and the good or bad turn that things took, was principally dependant on the caprice of his Kaimak (Grand Vizier) who had unlimited power.

Tabris has become the most flourishing city in the Persian Empire, not through the exertions of the governor, but through the increase of trade, founded on the greater degree of political security. Manufactures were not greatly improved ; looms, in most households of the town, provided the clothing of the common people ; the few silk weavers who prepared the raw material from Mazanderan, did not yield much ; and the shops of the town only offered the coarsest articles. Everything else, in demand by a luxurious community, had to be imported. The shops of Tabris became filled with the goods of Europe

and of India; the transit trade from Constantinople by the Euxine, and from Russia by the Caspian, was greatly on the increase. The value of goods annually imported from Russia, by Astrachan, was estimated at 600,000 tomans (£300,000 sterling.) The manufactured goods of Cashmere were forwarded to Tabris by the Indian merchants themselves, and exchanged for the bazaar of Constantinople against European merchandize. The goods were brought from British India by Abus chir, and the Arabian goods were introduced by the same route, or by Bagdad. Hitherto, all the trade had remained in the hands of natives; not a European or foreign house was established at Tabris. No commercial treaty had been concluded with Persia by any of the brilliant embassies sent there from England. The nearest English Consul at Trebizond, had the liberty of trading with Tabris, by his agents; Erzeroum became a branch establishment, in order to forward British goods by a cheaper way than before, through Abus chir, which led to a journey of one thousand two hundred miles, and a cost of ten to fourteen tomans for the carriage, whilst the distance and cost by

Trebizond were diminished by one half. Notwithstanding this step in advance, no great amount of trade was as yet attracted to Tabris from Europe, especially as the prejudice still prevailed among the Persian buyers, that the market on the Bosphorus was superior to all others.

These accounts tally exactly with those of B. Fraser, who was at Tabris in 1833, where he refreshed himself, after extensive peregrinations in Persia, and where he saw Mohammed Mirza, just before the death of Feth-Ali-Shah.

Ker Porter had already proclaimed the great change introduced in the education of the royal princes, who had been before chiefly shut up in the harem, under a Mollah. Abbas Mirza had provided for the instruction of his sons, causing them to learn astronomy, mathematics, &c., and to be made familiar with transactions in and out of the palace. Yet his efforts seem to have been misdirected, for no improvement took place.

Prince Mohammed, the young Shah, was only twenty-eight years old, and very corpulent; he developed very little energy in his critical situation, nor any foresight, and he resigned

his fate entirely into the hands of his kaimak, and of foreigners.

The troops of Tabris were in the field against the Koords, and under British officers, when Mohammed first came there. During his father's absence, the province had been fleeced by his brothers, and *employés* whom he had left in charge. The court had become poor in Khorasan ; in Aserbeidschan, the treasury was empty ; his two brothers, (Jehanger and Khosru Mirza,) required punishment at his hands for their misdemeanour. They were imprisoned at Ardabir. All power was at first committed to the kaimak, Mirza Abul Cassim, who is described as a man of great talent and experience in affairs, but a cunning intriguant, a liar and a hypocrite, full of coarseness and avarice, and so hateful, even to the princes, that he was strangled soon after the accession of Mohammed. Nevertheless, Fraser makes the repeated assertion that Tabris (1834) was the most flourishing place in the empire, because it was independant of the government, had been raised to prosperity by the great activity of its merchants, and had become a grand emporium, and intersecting line of the

Turkish and Russian caravans. The route to Herat brought goods thither from India, Turkey, and Bokhara. Russian produce for South and West Persia, came from Tiflis, Turkish wares came from Erzeroum, English from Tokat. Frazer estimates the value of the European trade at one million sterling, and the home trade at the same amount, a large sum for a poor empire like Persia, and enough to explain the steady prosperity of Tabris. In eighty hours from Tabris you reach Tiflis, with its active European life, thus passing from the east to the west. The transition is almost as speedy to Erzeroum and Trebizond, bringing you in contact with the West at the Bosphorus. No other Persian capital has such a peculiar position in relation to Europe; hence Tabris will always be called to an increasing importance in its influence in civilizing Persia.

Thus far we have followed Ritter in his admirable account of the reign of Feth-Ali-Shah, and the interesting episode of the reform of Abbas. The progressive movement was even diffused to the Affghans, and to Bokhara, where attempts were made to organize and discipline the troops, a system that has se-

cured the superiority of Europe over the East.

The hopes of sanguine politicians relating to the sudden improvement of Asiatic countries, have been commonly doomed to disappointment. The progress of nations is a gradual affair, nor can it be effected by sudden jumps or revolutions. Hence, Asia cannot be rapidly rescued from the decay into which centuries of mis-government and misfortunes have plunged it. Persia is also too remote to feel much influence from our culture. Even Asiatic Turkey is almost as deteriorated as Persia, and the reforms have not yet effected half so much there as in European Turkey. If the pliant, industrious Persians, with their excellent natural gifts, and malleable character, had occupied the place of the indolent and immovable Turks, who do nothing great save in military matters, if they had inhabited the shores of the Euxine, European culture would have effected much more in the East. The inquisitive Persian would have acquired European arts, and civilization would have passed into Asia. The Turk, notwithstanding his many honourable qualities, will remain a barbarian in the European frock-coat, he will

appropriate our vices sooner than our virtues, and lose the fine old Turkish characteristics—fidelity, honesty and loyalty. Distance was the great obstacle to culture in Persia, which, if she had been a neighbour, must have rapidly adopted many of our advantages, even under the worst of rulers. A reformer, having the energy, and enlarged views of Peter, could, even now, effect wonders among the docile, lively and impressionable Persians. He might found a great civilized empire in the heart of Asia, between Russia and British India. This would be impossible in Turkey, owing to the degeneracy of the race, to their indolence, and to the disproportion of the Osmanli population to the Rajahs.

The reader will have seen from the previous sketch, that, notwithstanding the sanguine hopes of his friends, Abbas Mirza was not the man to rescue an empire so deeply degraded. He became an early victim to his indulgences; and his son, Mohammed Shah, only inherited his sensual propensities and weaknesses, without his lofty aims, chivalrous character, and enthusiasm in favour of European improvements. He encountered little opposition on his accession

to the throne ; for the fleeced and exhausted provinces and cities cannot even afford material for insurrection, notwithstanding the ambitious views of many of the provincial satraps. In the latter years of his reign, when his constitution of body and mind had long been completely prostrate, Feth-Ali-Shah had given up the whole provincial administration to his sons. He fostered a hydra of parties and pretenders. When death, at length, overtook him (1834), all his sons aimed at the throne. But the material means were wanting to them, and the small force of the son of Abbas Mirza, backed by British gold and officers, sufficed to secure the throne for him. Zile Sultan, who had usurped the authority at Teheran, was hurled from the throne ; and the rebellious uncles in Fars were subdued. The Kadjar dynasty retained the sceptre. The empire itself was too decayed, and the neighbouring states too exhausted to oppose a rival to Mahommed Shah. Even the Affchar race was now too degenerate to produce another savage hero of the stamp of Nadir Shah. In the remotest provinces, the discipline of the regular troops, established by British officers, triumphed over the old Asiatic disorder and

barbarism. The rebellious uncles could not resist this small force; and the greater part of them were brought as captives to Teheran, where some died, as was reported, of cholera or prison fever, and others were restored to favour.

Some of his father's ambition appeared to inspire the young Shah during the first years of his reign, ere his corpulence and enormous appetite had mastered him, together with the gout, which afterwards embittered his life and throne. He determined to recover Khorasan, and to complete the conquest of Herat. The British mission, thinking it to be the interest of England, and of our Indian empire, to maintain independant dynasties in Affghanistan, and to preserve tranquillity in Central Asia, as a security against Russian aggression, looked on this expedition as a calamity, whilst, on the other hand, it was supported by the Muscovite mission. Good judges, have, however, felt doubtful if these encroachments of Persia, inuring her troops to war, were really advantageous to England and hurtful to Russia. I have met with Englishmen at Tabris and Erzeroum, intimately acquainted with Oriental affairs, and yet, agreeing with Morier that the British Government attaches much too great a

value to the political importance of Persia, and makes much greater sacrifices to the influence of the Court of Teheran than that enervated and degenerate country deserves, especially as it is so remote from India.

But Russia, as the nearest neighbour, has a closer interest; and when the Russian envoy at that time, Count Simonitsch, secretly favoured the plans of conquest entertained by the young Shah, it was only to diminish British influence in Persia, and to oppose the diplomatic and military agents of England. If Sir Henry Ellis had, at that time, advocated the campaign against Herat, Count Simonitsch would have probably opposed it. English and Russian influence are in perpetual conflict at the Court of Teheran; and sometimes the activity and controversies of the agents of these two great powers go beyond the intentions of their respective governments. Though Sir Henry Ellis declared that England would conceive herself aggrieved by the conquest of any part of Affghanistan, the preparations for the expedition continued.

For this reason, all the British officers quitted the Persian army, in 1837. But the Russian mission supported the undertaking with its

advice, and accompanied the Shah to the walls of Herat, where the weak-minded Kamran Shah, his sagacious Vizier Yar Mohammed, both favourable to European tactics, prepared a vigorous resistance. On the other hand, Dost Mohammed of Caboul, and Kohundil Khan of Kandahak had approached Persia, and courted the friendship of the young Shah, and of his mighty Russian protector. Threatened by the arms of Runjeet Singh, and of the English, these Affghan Princes thought they must seek for aid from Persia and Russia, although the latter was too remote, and the former too helpless to give them any effectual support. It is well known that the Persian campaign against Herat, and its siege in 1838, were a failure. The Persian expedition, weakened by hardships and disease, fell back ; and since that time, the gouty Shah abstained from all conquests, whilst his ailment and imbecility augmented yearly.

It was at this period, that France tried to recover its influence at the Persian court. Since the mission under Bonaparte, France had given up all diplomatic relations with Central Asia. Not having any commercial transactions with Persia, she has much less immediate

interest in her affairs than Austria. But France has long entertained different sentiments of national dignity and her political influence, to those harboured by the Court of Vienna.

Notwithstanding his indolence and limited capacity, Mohammed Shah, was perfectly aware that he owed his throne to the organization of his army by British officers. He also knew that the maintenance of a regular force was his only security against his uncles and neighbours. As England was sulky, and Russia dangerous, the wiseacres at Court remembered the existence of another Feringhi power. The novel of Haji-Baba still gives the best insight into the contracted spirit of Persian policy. The name of Napoleon had penetrated even into their benighted atmosphere, and the Persian government, in their perplexity, thought of resorting to France for military inspectors.

Hussein Khan, a handsome man of shrewd character, but not of the noblest birth, was intrusted with this mission, which made more sensation at Paris than it deserved. The French who are bad travellers, had formed quite an erroneous notion of Persia, from the very incorrect descriptions of their former travellers,

Tavernier, Chardin, &c., who being generally tradesmen, and dazzled with the splendour of the Court, gave very exaggerated descriptions of it, dwelling almost exclusively on the pomp and wealth of the great. Hence, the French regarded Persia, as a fabulous land, the realization of the Arabian Nights. It is only recent, chiefly British travellers who have shown Persia in a true light, describing its decay and the decrease in its population. The French did not know these works, and their vanity was gratified by the pompous reception of the envoy of a flourishing oriental Empire, at the Tuileries.

Hussein Khan who had received his appointment by accident or caprice, played his part admirably. He soon saw through the French, with whom a great quack generally thrives best, and though his funds were low, he extricated himself from all difficulties. His kalpak and his silk caftan, imposed at the hotel and on shopkeepers. He made purchases nominally for his court, and to show his countrymen the wonders of French art. The object of his mission, he treated as a secondary matter, but he was himself deceived in his attempts to enlist

inspectors. When it was found that Louis Philippe must pay the debts of the envoy, his credit sank sadly, and no one took any farther notice of him. He afterwards visited England, but there he met with a cooler reception, and was judged more accurately.

We are not aware if the Shah subsequently paid his debts, but this we know, that on his return to Teheran, all the luggage of his mules and pack-horses was seized, and most of the pretty things which the Ex-Envoy had brought to adorn his house, were retained by the sovereign.

A dozen French officers had accompanied these Modes of Paris, most of them discharged officers, giving themselves the title of Colonel, and attired in the most fanciful uniforms. Count Damas, an elderly man of the world, succeeded in making the greatest impression at Teheran. This impudent quack, had been a non-commissioned officer under Napoleon, and had brought his wife with three female relations to Persia. His arrogance imposed, and his stories were believed. At his first audience, he seated himself before the Shah, pleading a wound received at Austerlitz. This innovation was outrageous, but did him no injury. His grey

hairs and moustachio, commanding face, and aristocratic bearing, imposed on the Shah and vizier, who thought that so remarkable a man must be able to effect great things.

Count Damas amused the Shah, and increased his appetite, as well as helped his digestion. He also led him to infer that he had deterred Napoleon from marching against Persia. At the end of the first audience, Damas was appointed Persian General, and MM. Delacroix and Pigeon, were appointed as his subordinates. The other Frenchmen received inferior grades. Abbé Vidal had been engaged as teacher of the French language, and was to be the tutor of the Crown prince. The latter was at that time a boy nine years of age, and had lately seen the Emperor Nicholas in Armenia, when the colossal Czar, bored with the etiquette of the interview, had dandled the lad on his knee, and had suffered him to play with his Imperial mustachio. The familiarity, personal appearance, and pompous entourage of the great Czar, are said to have made a great and lasting impression on the prince, and his suite. Accordingly, the Court of Teheran thought it expedient that the heir apparent should acquire the

universal polite language of Europe, that he might utter some appropriate sentences, if the Russian ruler should ever think fit to nurse him on his knee again.

I have stated elsewhere, that I met MM. Delacroix, Pigeon and Vidal, in Georgia. They were amiable Frenchmen, of sociable manners, and their conversation was very entertaining, as they had resided four years in Persia. These gentlemen had experienced the same fate as most military men and engineers, who have offered their services to the Porte. The authorities in both cases had received them well, approved their reforms, and promised great things. They had been most profuse in expressions of gratitude, when they saw their awkward squad disciplined, and their batteries organized. But their zeal cooled, so soon as they discovered that money was wanted, for Persians are especially much meaner than Turks in expenditure, the latter being not unfrequently governed by generous impulses. There are Turkish grandes, who prefer spending to receiving, and who not only love splendour, but are animated with a liberal spirit, which is hardly known by name in Persia. Owing to

the disordered finances, and poverty of the country, the pay of the troops is much more uncertain in Persia than in Turkey, where, since the reforms, more regularity has taken place in political economy, and the Europeans serving the Porte are now paid with tolerable regularity.

The indolence and indifference of Orientals, usually soon infect Europeans, who have received appointments in the East, and their zeal for reform speedily evaporates. Suspicion and an almost ineradicable antipathy of Europeans, is an additional impediment to the success of well-intentioned Franks, of whom the number is limited. A real improvement of the Oriental character, especially among the great, is probably impossible, without a great revolution.

Mohammed Shah was prevented, by his gout and corpulence, from attending frequently the military exercises. He aged rapidly, and preferred to recline on the cushions of the divan, only getting himself lifted into the saddle on extraordinary occasions. He had strangled his old Kaimakan, Mirza Abul Kassim, in a fit of wrath. Since then, the old teacher of the Shah, Hadschi-Mirza-Agassi, acted as vizier.

This old Mollah was a strange fellow, was reckoned learned and wise, devout, and even holy, though to the Europeans, he appeared a mixture of a cunning fox and a madcap. He was not equal to his post. He was deficient alike in knowledge of the country and penetration, and in honesty and fidelity. But such qualities are not in request in Persia. The confidence and the favour of the Shah are everything. The old Hadschi committed the strangest vagaries; he squandered the public revenue in the wildest projects, gave away the provinces and towns to the greatest scoundrels, and extorted vast sums from them for his own privy purse.

The Minister exercised a wonderful influence over the decrepid Shah, who let him manage everything, with the remark, that the Hadschi was as wise as he was holy, and if all did not receive justice at his hands, it was owing to the imperfection of human nature. The unhappy monarch, who was exposed to attacks of spleen, during which he emptied the vials of his wrath on his subjects, enjoying and assisting at cruel executions; always showed an invariable indulgence to his Minister. His weak mind was

possessed with the fixed idea that Persia did not produce a wiser or holier man than the Hadschi: Abul Kassim had fallen a victim to his first attack of bile, but Mirza Agassi passed successfully through the ordeal of all his crises. I admit that his favour was openly attributed, in Persia, to foreign influence. The Mollah, who was often stubborn, and obstinately opposed the best suggestions, became docile and manageable, at the least hint of Count Medem in the name of Russia. But what could Russia care about the misfortunes of that state? What object could she have in opposing the desolation of the country, and its depopulation, by the oppression of a grasping sycophant and madcap? It is evident that the increasing misery of the people, and decay of the empire, could only be favourable to the plans of Russian aggression, and reconcile the population to a system which, though despotic, presented the advantages of order and security, in bright contrast with the caprices and whims of their own selfish rulers.

The ruling passion of Hadschi-Mirza-Agassi, after his well-filled coffers, was the cannon foundry of the English. The workshops of Teheran were perpetually engaged in casting

cannon of all calibres. The provinces could not supply metal fast enough to satisfy this peculiar fancy of the Hadschi. A large part, not only of the Saa durant (irregular contributions), but even of the Maleyat, (or regular taxes), were appropriated to this purpose. Unless one gun, at least, was cast per week, the Minister had blue-devils, and some grandee or *employé* fell a victim to him. The Vizier succeeded even in infecting the Shah with part of his rage for casting guns. He did not take much interest in the mounting and equipment of the guns, and the plans of M. Delacroix, on this score, met with a cool reception. The cost of the harness appeared to him excessive; he preferred his guns without carriages or horses, and Delacroix only managed to mount two weak batteries. The Vizier was, moreover, fond of military parades, without understanding anything about them. In fact, the wilder the chaos and confusion, the greater was his delight, and if the review presented a glorious cloud of gunpowder, and canopy of dust, he returned in a charming mood to the Shah, whom he regaled with a gorgeous description of the spectacle.

The French officers, at length, disgusted with impediments and intrigues, let the Vizier have it all his own way. Count Damas did not long enjoy his title of General, he died soon after of fever, and his wife and niece did not long survive him. He had many bitter hours before his death, owing to the Persian authorities refusing to pay him and his greedy drago-mans and servants. The other French officers could find no redress, and were forced to appeal to the Russian embassy. Count Medem, a man of honourable character and engaging manners, interceded with the Vizier, who acceded instantly to his request, paid the Frenchmen, and decorated them, moreover, with the Order of the Sun and Lion, set with mock diamonds. Soothed, satisfied, and decorated, though disappointed in their fondest dreams, these French adventurers, now dubbed Persian Colonels, started on their journey home, with two ladies, greyhounds, poodles, and parrots, leaving only one of their number behind.

Abbé Vidal also resigned his office, and obtained his salary, through the medium of Count Medem. We have seen the jovial priest in Georgia, where his attire and manners were

anything but clerical. In the course of subsequent conversation, he imparted much interesting information about Persia. Like almost all Europeans, he had the lowest opinion of the Persians, describing them as lying, hypocritical, and rascally. Yet he thought the common people not half so corrupt as the great. The Governor of Urmia had once replied to a sermon of the missionary Horul, with the remark, that a Persian lies as long as his tongue moves. This was confirmed by many narratives of Abbé Vidal, showing how deeply this vice is rooted in the Persian Court. For even the Shah, on his silken divan, seldom opened his mouth without uttering a few untruths, though, as absolute despot, he need not have had recourse to this expedient. Lying is the habit of life in Persia, and is sucked in by babes, with their mother's milk.

Abbé Vidal had enjoyed numerous opportunities of looking behind the scenes at the Court, and in the domestic circles of Teheran. He had not succeeded in teaching the young Crown-Prince French, owing to the opposition and intrigues of the Mollahs and the old Had-schi. But he had instructed some of the pages,

and the sons of noblemen, and he spoke highly of the quickness and docility of the Persian children. When he left Teheran, there was a considerable number of black-eyed Persian lads, with lambs'-wool caps and hanging sleeves, who spoke French almost like Parisians. But cunning and duplicity is inherent in them from the tenderest age. Abbé Vidal could have taught them all the science of Europe much sooner than have brought them to practise Christian morality. He added, that it was a hopeless undertaking to attempt to awaken or improve their moral sense, to work on their mind and heart, and to bring them to practise the virtues of neighbourly love, forbearance, disinterestedness, and magnanimity, which, I admit, are rarely developed, even in us.

Nor did Abbé Vidal give a favourable picture of domestic life in Persia. On all hands he detected the germs of brotherly hatred, and envy. The children at an early age, are taught to direct their attention to the paternal inheritance, and hence every effort is made to secure their father's favour. The children are treated very differently, according to the charms of their mothers. The child of a favourite wife, will be

clothed in satins, and fed on dainties, whilst the infant of a less favoured spouse will be neglected. Hence discord and strife.

One of the French ladies described to us her visits to different harems. She met a German woman, from Georgia, in the harem of a Mollah, who had been stolen by Koords, and had almost forgotten her mother tongue. Several other German women had been swept off from the colonies near Tiflis, and bore their fate with equal resignation. One of the colonists in Georgia, who had thus lost his wife, received suddenly a letter from his better-half, informing him frankly that she had married a Persian priest, and had several children and that she was quite happy, and she concluded by advising her first lord to follow her example.

When the gout of Mohamed Shah continued to increase, notwithstanding the mixtures of Persian doctors, and the amulets and talismans of the Mollahs, he had recourse to the art of Europeans. The consular doctors, including Dr. Cassolani, were called in. But the steady growth of his malady defied all medical skill, and his spleen augmented with his disorder. He was vexed to see thousands of his subjects going

about him in the enjoyment of health, whilst he was a prey to disease, and required help to descend from the divan. During a fit of indigestion, he required the sight of human suffering to give him endurance. It required the amputation of many noses and ears, to brace his weak nerves, and to give him an appetite. He could not satisfy his cruel lusts on the grand scale of Timur or Nadir, for the humane spirit of the age, and the influence of the European power would not tolerate such enormities. But though the gouty Shah had no opportunity of practising the tyranny on such a vast scale as Nadir, he showed a tendency to that eccentric and humorous persecution, more common in the West, in such characters as Ivan the Terrible, Nero, and Louis XI.

Abbé Vidal related that the Shah took an especial pleasure in causing fathers, among his courtiers, to be cudgelled by their sons. He laughed so immoderately at this spectacle, that he was obliged to hold his sides, forgot his pains for a moment and eat his pilaf with improved appetite.

He would have indulged in executions, if he had not been prevented by the Vizier. Mirza Agassi loved guns and tomans, but he did not

like bloodshed and torture. Whenever he heard of capital condemnations, he hurried to the seraglio, reproached the Shah, and made him compute the punishment into a fine, of which the humane Vizier, of course, got the lion's share.

He saved many heads, but he was not so successful with ears and noses, nor could he stop the cudgelling. But there is one means of avoiding punishment still in vogue, as at the time of Hadschi-Baba. The criminal generally negotiates with the executioner, and each time that the latter lifts the lash, or wets his knife, the victim whispers a certain amount of cash in his ears. The higher the sum bid, the gentler is the chastisement, and in some cases, the ear is only ripped to make the blood flow, after which, the kalpak is pulled over the scratch to hide the cheat. Corruption is even more widely spread in Persia, than in Russia and Turkey. Bribery reaches to the throne, and Delacroix told me the following fact, which beats everything in Hadschi-Baba. Mohamed Shah wished one day to assist at a battue, in which the game was driven before him into a convenient position, and shot by him at his leisure. By an oversight of the inspector of the chase, the game

was let loose before the monarch was perched. A portion had the good luck to escape. The Shah, in a rage, condemned the culprit to lose his ears, and the verdict was to be carried out in his presence. But the inspector was a man of substance, and whispered a shower of tomans into the ears of the executioner. The Shah, who had been engaged with another suit, heard a few words of the secret conversation. His wrath was partially cooled, he directed the inspector to double his offer of tomans, which he emptied into his privy purse, but made a present of the punishment to the culprit, who received his ears into the bargain.

The Kadschar dynasty has never provided a ruler to compare in ability, with the Afschar Nadir Shah. Hence, perhaps, their deep hatred of the latter. Mohamed Shah was puerile enough to order the bones of the Great Nadir to be buried under his door-posts, that he might tread over them so often as he left the palace.

The decay of the dynasty has accompanied that of the country. Neither in Persia nor in Turkey, could the energetic ministers of former days re-enact their parts, even if they had the

inclination to do so. Their subjects would refuse obedience, nor would the English and Russian Embassies tolerate their excesses.

Even the political opponents of Russia, must admit that in her relations with Persia, an impartial judgment would pronounce her proceedings to be moderate, almost magnanimous. When a fanatical mob attacked the Russian Embassy at Teheran, and slew the Envoy, the Czar's Government did not resent the affront as an occasion of war, but only demanded the punishment of the offenders. A large part, even, of the debt contracted in the last war, has been remitted. When Paskiewitsch advanced victorious to Lake Urmia, it was in the power of Russia to recover the fine provinces of Ghilan and Masanderan, on the Caspian Sea, celebrated as a paradise by Firdusi, and once the property of Peter the Great. The possession of these splendid maritime provinces would have been of incalculable value to Russia. The north-east slope of the Abkur chain, towards the Caspian, is rich in minerals, especially coal, and the soil is indescribably fertile. The climate is unhealthy, indeed, especially to northern settlers. But it is well known that Russia does not scruple to

sacrifice human life to state interests. In the genial climate of Masanderan, most of those tropical plants flourish which cannot stand the cold of the valleys of Georgia. The Russian Major Woskobismikoff of the Corps of Mines, discovered excellent veins of coal, silver, lead, and copper, there. The virgin forests afford an almost inexhaustible supply of timber for ship building. Even palm trees flourish in its gentle air, whilst not even the olive can thrive at Derbent, on the Russian shore of the Caspian. It is only by the occupation of these provinces, that the Russian trade on the Caspian could acquire some importance. The ports are also much better on the south coast. Russian agents in the East express pretty candidly their wish that these provinces, now so desolate, might be added to the Russian sceptre. Even at Tabris, the gentlemen of the Muscovite Consulate, speak the same language as those of Tiflis and Erivan, saying : " Ghilan and Masanderan must belong to us, and the Government of St. Petersburg will eventually see the consequences of this occupation to Trans-Caucasia, which would then become a boon, whilst it is now a burthen to Russia."

The same sentiments were probably uttered by the Muscovites who accompanied Paskiewitsch, when he dictated peace to Persia, at Tabris. But the Emperor Nicholas, and Chancellor Nesselrode, adopted the maxim of acting a moderate part in the East, and of only advancing gradually, especially as their glance was also directed Westwards, where an eruption of the revolutionary crater threatened. A clear political brain, once stated in the Tribune of Deputies at Paris, that so long as the Polish question was not definitively settled, people at St. Petersburg deliberate before they take any step in the East.

The Emperor Nicholas is by no means tormented with a love of form and thirst of ambition, like his predecessors, Peter I. and Catherine II. He has only done in this respect, what was unavoidable in a state and dynasty destined for conquest. It gives him more pleasure to place his foot on the neck of the European democracy, then to conquer the Celestial Empire, and install a Russian governor-general at Peking, or Canton.* Yet, on the other hand, the policy of the Cabinet of St. Petersburg is far from being so pacific and

* This was written before the embassy of Menschikoff to Turkey in 1853.

disinterested, as it is represented by its admirers. The fortresses of Gumri and Erivan, the wharfs of Nicholaieff, and the fleet of Sevastopol, as well as the military demonstration on the Danube, are in diametrical contradiction to these laudations of political moderation in Russia. The Emperor Nicholas has not the ambition of conquering Persia and Turkey at present, but he is quietly preparing the way for their future occupation by one of his successors. Unless unforeseen accidents should arise, or another storm burst forth in the West, Persia and Asiatic Turkey will eventually fall like over ripe pears, of their own accord, into the lap of Russia, without any efforts on her part.

According to the views of Russian agents, Russia played far too moderate a part at the treaty with Persia. She remained satisfied with the Araxes frontier, with Erivan and Nachitschewan, and a small angle of the holy Mount Ararat, together with the coast of Lenkoran, and the mountains of Talysch. I grant that Etchmiazin, the ancient Armenian patriarchal sea, was included in these acquisitions, securing a powerful religious influence to Russia, extending over all the scattered members

of the Armenian family. But those who know the strength of Russia, and the weakness of Persia, must still wonder at the moderation of the former, in not grasping Ghilan and Masenderan from the vanquished and humiliated Shah. A continuation of the war, and a flickering of departed energy, under Feth-Ali-Shah and Abbas Mirza, only served to expose more completely the weak side of the empire. Nothing opposed the advance of a Russian army to Teheran, save the wreck of an army utterly discouraged and disorganized. As Persia was even then in a state of impotence, which has only increased since, all that was required of the Northern giant to seize the four provinces south of the Caspian, was merely to stoop and pick them up. England would scarcely have declared war against Russia, for the sake of some Persian provinces, and the other European powers could not care much for an extension of Russia in this direction. Russian agents in the East still lament the moderation of Muscovy at the last peace, and maintain that the Emperor himself does not appreciate these fine provinces. Nicholas does not, at any time, seem to have thought of a

great Oriental empire under his sceptre; and, after his visit to Trans-Caucasia, in 1837, his desire for conquest in Western Asia does not seem to have increased. He is said to have expressed to General Rosen his disappointment at the appearance of the Trans-Caucasian provinces, adding, that fifty years would be required to organize them properly in the Russian fashion, *i. e.*, with barrack discipline. When Trans-Caucasia is so far civilized, that its Armenians, Tartars, and Georgians, can be drawn as recruits, and put on the grey-coat, Muscovy will have accomplished her mission, and then, the Double Eagle can take a farther flight over the Araxes, and bring other populations under the sway of the Russian barracks' system.

M. Von Osserow tried to impress me with the moderate tone of the Petersburg Cabinet, in its instructions to the Embassy of Teheran. He stated that, all suggestions from Russia, relating to trade, were couched in the language of supplication, that Russia had never spoken as conqueror there, or reminded Persia of her weakness. The only occasion, when she used a threatening tone, was when Count Medem

claimed the extradition of eight hundred Russian deserters, most of them in the Shah's service, and converts to Islam, which they embraced as a protection. The Shah and Hadschi refused, at first, to accede, but when Count Medem threatened to send to Tiflis for troops, they gave in; the unhappy deserters were marched to Russia, but some hundreds escaped to Turkey, or managed to conceal themselves. Other requests of Russia were only partly acceded to.

English diplomacy did not enjoy nearly so much influence under Mahomed Shah, as under Feth-Ali-Shah and Abbas Mirza. The greater parsimony of the British Government, eschewing subsidies and presents, was not calculated to advance British interests in Persia. Though the members of the British mission were more familiar with the country than the Russians, Colonel Shiel played a very subordinate part to Count Medem, whose refined manners, and amiable character, were well adapted to the polished tastes of the Persians. Since the project of the conquest of Herat had been given up, there was no prominent subject of agitation at the Court. The question about the boundary of Persia and Turkey were dis-

cussed at Erzeroum, under the mediation of Russia and England; it was not likely to lead to a war between the two exhausted Moslem Empires, nor did it excite much interest at Teheran.

At the time of my arrival at Tabris, France had accredited Count Sartiges as its Envoy at the Court of Teheran. Circumstances had induced the French Cabinet to see the propriety of recovering its influence in Persia. The discharged French officers had reported that people in the East had too little respect for *la grande nation*, adding, they had been forced to seek redress through the Russian Embassy. The boundary question was another motive; but the principal incentive, was a piece of violence practised against the French Lazzarists at Urmia. The former Governor of Urmia, an uncle of the Shah, who had a great partiality for the French, presented the Lazzarists and their congregation with a church, which he had unjustly taken from the Nestorians. After his removal, the Nestorians petitioned for the restoration of the church, whose possession was secured to them by the new Bey of Urmia. The Lazzarist Missionaries sided with the Catholics,

whilst the American Missionaries, as Protestants, stood up for the just claims of the Nestorians. The quarrel became embittered at Urmia, where the Catholics only form a small body; and the Lazzarists had a very unpleasant time of it. They were insulted by the Nestorian mob, who threatened to assail their houses. The final decision in this matter was left to the Shah, or rather, to the Vizier. The Bey of Urmia, who had been brought over by the Nestorian clergy, gave a report, very unfavourable to the Catholic Christians, and Mirza Agassi resolved to make short work of it, and turn the Lazzarists out of the country. He found this an easy task, as he was countenanced in it by the Russian and British Missions, who viewed the attempts of France to gain religious and political influence in Persia with an evil eye. The Lazzarists retired to Mossul, save one Missionary, who withdrew to Tabris, and appeared to keep aloof from Persian affairs.

Heavy complaints reached the French Embassy at Constantinople, from the Lazzarists. All the French clergy in the East, supported them with pious zeal, especially the celebrated French author, Eugene Bové, who still resides

at Constantinople, with a salary from the society at Lyons, for the propagation of the Catholic Faith. There were bad complaints of persecution of the Catholics, of affronts to France, and the French Cabinet was openly called upon to interfere in Persia. Count Bourqueney proposed to M. Guizot, to send Count Sartiges, a young attaché, to Teheran, and the French minister assented, as he wished France still to continue the protection of Catholics in the East, and felt the propriety of extending French influence in those parts. M. Goep was sent to Erzeroum, and three months after, Count Sartiges started for Teheran, where he met with a brilliant reception, especially as he brought large presents. We could not discover anything definite, respecting the influence of this diplomatist, in Persia. As a rival of Russian and English interests, he was received coolly by Count Medem and Colonel Shiel. The Lazzarists were allowed to return to Urmia, but the Church remained in the hands of the Nestorians.

CHAPTER VI.

The Saharet Chain of Mountains—Liwan—Maraghia—A Delightful Encampment—The Château of the Sardar of Tabris—Mirza Ali, the cawass—Determination to Explore the Districts South of the Lake Urmia—Scarcity of Information respecting those Regions—Preparations for the Journey—The Village of Sirdari—Mamegan—An Unpleasant Adventure—The Cadi—View from the Summit of Nedili-Dagh—Interesting Geological Phenomena—Binab.

ONE hot July morning, when the thermometer, soon after sunrise, showed 23° Reamur, I rode, accompanied by Dr. Cassolani and a Persian guide, from Tabris, southward towards the Saharet chain of mountains, which rises about 4,000 feet above the level of the Lake Urmia, and 8,400 above the Black Sea, the numerous streams which flow from these mountains, into the plains below, supply the greatest quantity of water to the Lake Urmia. During the latter part of my stay at Tabris, the heat had become unbearable, and the dust

which the diurnal winds blew in clouds through the narrow streets, rendered the atmosphere still more stifling. At this season, every one who can possibly get away from the town, hastens to the cool terraces of Saharet, and frequent during these hot months, the green valleys of this pretty mountain group. The Consuls usually leave Tabris about the middle of July, for these cool heights. Herr Von Osserow, the Russian Consul General, with the attachés of the Consulate, had pitched his tent near the village of Herbi, on the little river Wasmisch-tschai, and intended remaining there until the middle of September. Our agreement was to meet in one of the highest villages of the Saharet, near the hot springs of Liwan; Dr. Cassolani was very anxious to explore those springs, to which, the natives ascribe miraculous virtues.

Liwan is a large village, with a remarkably fruitful entourage, being completely surrounded by gardens, meadows and fields. The corn was cut, but the clover presented a most luxuriant crop. The people of Liwan correspond to the country, and appear quite thriving, compared to most Persian populations.

The men are tall and muscular, with handsome features, and a dark brown complexion. We cannot pause to describe the thermal springs and geological features of this remarkable district, which presents some phenomena of an almost anomalous character.

We passed a day at Liwan. M. Osserow, and the gentlemen of his suite, had arrived before us, with an escort of Cossacks, and had pitched their tents in a small mountain meadow, situated in a narrow limestone defile. The party had brought their Nestorian women with them, these ladies occupying each a small tent beside that of their lords. Nor did the fair inmates venture to unveil the charms of their countenances, notwithstanding the solitude of the place.

At the distance of a few hours from our bivouac on the Wasmisch-tschai, lay the little town of Maragha, on a river of the same name —a place celebrated in the middle ages, for the observatory of the great Persian astronomer, Nassyr-Eddyn, who drew a favourable horoscope for the rising fortunes of the great Mogul ruler, Hulaku-Khan. The Observatory secured the prosperity of the city, which possessed an

academy, and attained great celebrity in the thirteenth century. But Hulaku did not long enjoy his successes ; he died in 1264, at Maragha, and was soon followed to the grave by his wife, Daghush Khatun, who was a Christian. Both their tombs are said still to exist ; and Morier, as well as Kinnier, who visited Maragha, found some interesting antiquities there.

I was obliged to give up my design to visit Maragha, as I had left my interpreter and pack-horse at Tabris. I, therefore, resolved to accompany M. Osserow and the Russian embassy to Herbi, and rode down the course of the Wasmisch-tschai, through a narrow valley, which presented an exuberant growth of vegetation and verdure ; whilst the slopes, on both sides, being deficient in all humidity, stood out grim and bare above the grassy glen. We arrived, at first, at the large village of Bineh, surrounded by enchanting gardens. The valley widens near Herbi. We caught sight of the Russian tents, pitched in a beautiful meadow watered by sparkling streams, and under the shade of colossal willows and poplars. A dozen Cossacks kept watch in the neighbour-

hood. M. Osserow received me with his usual hospitality ; we enjoyed an abundant repast, and stretched on the sward, we inhaled with delight the cool evening mountain air. Seldom are the eyes of the Russian traveller greeted and soothed with such a verdant scene, in the height of summer, and amidst the arid hills and barren plains that cover so large a part of the country. We sat there almost till midnight, listening with interest to M. Osserow's account of the politics of Persia.

The following day, I returned with Doctor Cassolani to Tabris, passing through Halat-Haschan, where you see a pavilion or chateau of the Sardar of Tabris, situated on an island in an artificial lake. It is an ancient and annual custom, for the Sardar to come to this pavilion, and receive the investiture of his mantle of honour. The little chateau is built of bricks, and its interior is arranged entirely according to Persian taste. The arched ceiling of the lower saloon is adorned with variegated frescoes, representing landscapes, trees, flowers, and birds, but not giving a very high idea of Persian art. The sun penetrates into the building through windows of coloured glass ; for the Persians

are partial to this sort of subdued light ; and the female apartments of Persian grandes have these painted windows. Halat-Buschan, with its numerous poplars and willows, and tolerably abundant under-growth, presents, like the vale of Herbi, a charming oasis amidst the arid, bare, and sun-burnt landscape of Tabris. And this oasis must formerly have been still more enchanting, when its verdure and shady foliage were far more abundant ; a certain Behinen Mirza, the present Sardar, and brother of the Shah, being in financial difficulties, having caused three thousand of the finest trees to be cut down, and sold at a toman a piece, thus robbing the country of its finest ornaments.

During my short absence from Tabris, Mr. Bonham had procured for me, from Behinen Mirza, Sardar of Aserbeidschan, a firman, commanding me to the protection and hospitality of all Persian, and even Koordish authorities and chieftains in the wild mountain districts on the Turkish border.

As an additional security, Mr. Bonham obtained me the escort of a cawass, because, though the Persian Governors have succeeded in increasing the safety of travelling, and in over-

awing the unruly mountain chieftains, yet the latter still frequently prove refractory, as is evinced by the instances of several recent murders and attacks upon Europeans. Now, as the Persian, as well as the Turkish authorities, are ambitious of making a favourable impression in the West, they are much annoyed at these accidents, and do all in their power to prevent them.

Mirza Ali, my cawass, was a raw-boned, bronzed Persian, not above the middle height, and of a far from imposing carriage. His bearded face did not even bear a trace of the cunning and dissimulation so seldom absent from Persian countenances. Nor was his dress particularly distinguished; and his only weapons consisted of a bad carbine, and a common curved sword. Yet, Mr. Bonham assured me, that the presence of this man in secluded districts, would greatly add to the influence of the firman, especially in places where the people could not read. Accordingly, I submitted to the infliction of this worthy, and the maintenance of the man and his beast, amounting to a Persian ducat daily.

The plan I had projected consisted in an

attempt to explore the districts south of the Lake Urmia, which are less correctly known than any part of Western Asia. The mountains of Turkish Koordistan project like a wedge into Persia, to the south of Sank-Bulak. This range is inhabited by nomadic, or half settled tribes of Koords, Nestorians, and Yezi-dees, whose name, origin, and customs, have scarcely been examined or described. Neither Ker Porter (1818), Kinneir, Frazer, or Monteith, have contributed much satisfactory information on this subject. The district, in question, is the most interesting, and problematical in this part of Asia, containing the Zagros Alps, the source of the Zab, the residence of the terrible chief of the Hakkari Koords, the great triangle between Lakes Urmia and Van, the Zab Ala, and the Tigris ; comprising in its centre, the mysterious region of Dschulamerk, with the highest icy summit of all Koordistan, besides the elevated Alpine Republic of the Tijari Chaldæan Christians, from whose southern extremity the waters flow to all points of the compass ; to the Persian Gulf, to the Tigris, Lakes Urmia and the Caspian. Beyond this territory, stretches another, which is a complete

terra incognita, a mountain district south of Lake Van, to the Alpine sources of the Zab. The latest researches of Shiel, Grant, and the American missionaries, have not cleared up its mystery ; nor are we better acquainted with the middle course of the Zab Ala, or with Rewandoz, the mysterious capital of the Hakkari Koords, unvisited hitherto by any European, and in the vicinity of which the unfortunate Professor Schulz was murdered.

I proposed to make a complete circuit of Lake Urmia, to couple with it an excursion to Southern Koordistan, to go over the Pass of Kendilan-Dagh to Suleimanieh, to visit the sources of the Zab Asfal, and thence to proceed by Rewandoz, the passes of the Dscharwur Dagh, to the town of Urmia, where I should complete my examination of the Lake. The reader will see that subsequent circumstances induced me to modify this plan.

I had hired for my journey six pack horses of an Armenian, from Erzeroum. To the south of Daschgesan, a Persian traveller joined my party, and, on a sultry August morning, I took leave of my Tabris friends, and rode through the gate of the city. The bronzed

cawass led the way, and my bearded Pole, whose head was, for the first time, adorned with a Persian kalpak, bought in the bazaar, brought up the rear.

After a ride of four hours, we reached the little village of Sirdari, containing a lively bazaar, where you could even purchase ices. The Persian head man visited me in person, and assigned me quarters in the house of the wealthiest inhabitant, who wished me to enter his dwelling; but, in dread of vermin, the invariable accompaniment of Persian divans, I preferred reclining under the umbrageous fruit trees in the garden. My courteous host brought us a little basket, containing bread and kaimak, white mulberries, half white grapes, little apples, and excellent plums. The inhabitants of this village testified the most pressing curiosity, and besieged the entrance to the garden. Several sick persons were also announced, troubled, evidently, with incurable complaints, and whom I was obliged to dismiss with a few powders from my medicine chest. When the heat moderated, towards evening, I had the horses saddled, at the village of Illehitschi, where I

took up my night quarters, bivouacking in a vineyard, wrapped in my burka.

The next day, we passed the large village of Mamegan, built in the form of a terrace, on a gentle declivity. The curiosity of the inhabitants was very troublesome, a travelling European being quite a *rara avis* in this district. As far as the town of Duchalchan, the country was an arid plain, without a single brook, and the cultivation was very scanty, owing to the want of irrigation. It was only close to the villages, where the artificial canals supply a little moisture, that the smallest degree of verdure appeared.

At Dulchalchan, we met with an unpleasant adventure. As our cavalcade was passing through the market-place, the Persian mob had mustered in large numbers, and saluted us with laughter and jeers. When they saw us ride on quietly, they passed to insulting language, and ultimately to a shower of pebbles. The Pole, who was wounded by a stone in the left arm, jumped off his horse, and rushed into the midst of the crowd, with his drawn sword, seizing the supposed culprit by the collar.

The mob groaned, but did not dare to rescue

the prisoner. Mirza Ali had ridden on, round the corner of the street. Hearing the tumult, we wheeled about our horses, and dashed back to help the Pole ; but our aid was not wanted, nor was it requisite to threaten this cowardly people by drawing our pistols. For, although hundreds remained in the square and streets, and continued to hoot and insult us, not one ventured to rescue the lad from the sturdy grasp of the Pole. The cawass bound the hands of the prisoner, and we led him to the Cadi, before whose open tribunal, our cavalcade halted, whilst the crowd formed a half circle, at a respectful distance, congregated in chattering groups round the house. Their anger and malice seemed to have departed, and some grey beards in the mob strove to mitigate the fate of the prisoner by their intercessions. But, as the cawass informed me, that it was necessary to make an example, I entered the open tribunal.

The Cadi Mirza Tschebir, a handsome Persian, with a long beard, and distinguished attire, sat on the divan, in the full consciousness of his dignity, and was then engaged in deciding a case. When he saw me stride over his embroidered carpet, in my high Georgian riding-

boots, and in my singular costume, his face became clouded, for, according to Persian custom, the floor of tribunals must only be trod by slipperless feet. But, scarcely had the Cadi cast his eye over my firman, ere his sinister expression dissolved in a bland smile. He directed the litigants to be brought up, and attended immediately to our suit. After the Pole had related the occurrence, and had shown his wounded hand to the Cadi, the latter said to me: "The people in this district are a bad set. The Feringhi must not suppose that we scruple to cut off ears, or use the lash. But new crimes continually occur, notwithstanding any amount of executions."

On uttering these words, Mirza Tschebir cast a terrible look at the criminal, who was grappled fast by the arm by a tschausch. The young man was pale, trembling and weeping. I had pity on the poor devil, whose guilt could not even be accurately determined, because a score of pebbles had been thrown by the people, and it was not certain who had hit my servant. When the cawass had corroborated the statement of the Pole, the Cadi gave a nod, and uttered some unintelligible words to an atten-

dant. But the criminal seemed to comprehend them, lamented violently, and begged for mercy. It appears that his ears were in danger, and that a practised tschausch, with a sharp knife, stood ready to execute the commands of the Cadi. I, of course, protested vehemently against the sentence, and the Pole was obliged to interpret my lecture to the Cadi, about the inhuman nature of such a style of punishment. Mirza Tschebir listened to it very quietly, and contented himself with replying, "that every country has its own jurisprudence, and that these severe measures were necessary to keep the people in order. He did not appear displeased, however, at a mitigation of the verdict, which he had, probably, delivered out of respect for the firman, and for fear of complaints at Tabris, rather than from a love of justice. The young delinquent seemed wealthy enough to purchase the immunity of his ears, by a gift of tomans ; and the affair, probably, terminated in a mulct. At all events, I left the tribunal, requesting the Cadi to examine into the affair, and not to do anything contrary to our European notions of humanity.

We continued our journey ; and, after a ride

of two hours, we arrived at the foot of the Nedili-Dagh, a western outlier of the Sahant ridge. The summit of the mountain presents a beautiful and extensive panorama, of a most picturesque character. The eye embraces almost the entire area of the great salt basin of Lake Urmia, with the eccentric appearance of its shores, the lofty snowy ridges inclosing the salt-laden plains of Aserbeidschan, with their numerous villages and towns, their exuberant gardens, and melancholy solitudes. The most beautiful effect was produced by the Island of Schahi, with its picturesquely-shaped, rocky peaks, towering above the bluish-green waters, in the form of sharp pointed crowns. Viewed on this side, the island presents considerable similarity to the Island of Capri, in the Bay of Naples, whose picturesque outline is appreciated by all landscape painters. The plain on the east side of the Schahi Island was covered with a crust of salt, an inch-and-a-half in thickness, and I could see, through the telescope, people from the island riding to the market-place at Tabris, their horses appearing to sink, knee-deep, in the salt marsh. The level of the lake had fallen half a foot, during my short stay at Tabris.

On the evening of the same day, we reached the village of Daschgesan, a short mile from the lake, and situated close to the celebrated marble quarries, which yielded the most splendid building material of all Persia and Western Asia. The petrifying springs yielding this substance, gush forth in a small plain, four miles in circumference, containing, besides Daschgesan, the villages of Scheramin-Koi, and Chanajeh-Koi, amidst fertile fields, yielding good crops of wheat, rice, cotton, and sesamum (*ricinus*). The neighbourhood of the lakes and springs is sterile, and Daschgesan, where I staid a week, is the smallest village, only reckoning twenty miserable houses, a patch-work of tufa-stone, and fragments of marble, stuck together with mud.

The vicinity of Daschgesan presents some of the most interesting and puzzling geological phenomena with which I am acquainted, but I cannot dwell on them here. A careful survey of the district, satisfied me that the marble strata are an ancient deposit of the springs, which have still a feeble tendency to create the same result, but no longer produce any sensible effects. The marble which is found mixed with tufa-stone, varies greatly in colour, design, and

beauty. The handsomest varieties are milk-white, lemon-coloured, or pink. Occasionally it took the form of stalactites, a later formation, fringing the lower edge of the tufa strata, and caused by the filtering of the springs through its pores. The marbles are generally transparent when held to the sun, and their value increases in proportion to their transparency.

The most probable thing respecting the formation of the marble is advanced by the American Hitchcock, who suggests that the whole country about Lake Urmia, is essentially volcanic, hence that it was the seat of fire-worship, that the thermal springs were probably much hotter at one period, or at certain intervals, during which they had the faculty of depositing marble. Yet, I admit that the matter is still a problem.

I was never able to approach within fifty paces of the lake, owing to its marshy yielding bank, and after I left Daschgesan, continuing my journey along the southern shore of the lake, I endeavoured on all occasions, to come as near this Persian Dead Sea as possible. After a ride of three hours, we left behind us the bald stony mountains, and entered a broad

cheerful plain, covered with villages and cultivation. The little town of Binab, which has a tolerably lively bazaar, and is encompassed with orchards and vineyards, was our evening resting-place, after a ride of eight hours. We had not traversed a single stream, during the whole distance from Daschgesan to Binab. All the water descending from the Sahant ridge on this side is diverted by husbandmen, who use it to irrigate the land. As far as the little river Maragha, south of Binab, not a single rivulet of the Sahant chain reaches Lake Urmia in the dry summer months, all being diverted from their natural course into artificial canals. All my attempts to reach the banks of the lake were defeated, owing to the salt mud covering them.

At Binab, we found a very hospitable reception, delicious roast lamb, excellent pilaf, and tolerably savoury fruit. The Persian host, who gave us his company by the kitchen fire, advised us to take every precaution the following day, when after crossing the Dschagatu river, we should enter the genuine Koordish territory, and lay claim to the hospitality of wild and almost independant nomadic clans.

The report of the latest tragedy in the Christian highlands of Dschulamerk, of the triumphs and atrocities practised by the chieftains, Nurullah Beg and Beder Khan, over the unfortunate Nestorians, had penetrated even to this district. The turbulent and thievish character of the border Koords had become spread far and wide by these transactions. The Persian tax-gatherers found it difficult to levy tribute, even among the nearest Koordish tribes, whilst the clans and tribes above Sauk-Bulak refused to pay anything, and threatened the Sardar that they would join the Hakkari, with whom they had had hitherto lived in constant feuds.

CHAPTER VII.

From Binab to Persian-Koordistan — Dschagatu River — Scenery — A Night among Koordish Nomads — Characteristics of the Koords — The Southern Banks of Lake Urmia — A Bird Chase — Sauk Bulak — Condition of Koordistan — Ride to Serdascht and return to Sauk-Bulak — Balista — Babari — The inhospitable Nestorian — Turcoman — An Adventurer among Persian Women.

WE started for Koordistan on the 19th of August, considerably depressed by the narratives of our Persian host at Binab, relating to the threatening attitude of the tribes, and the fanatical excitement developed in all the Koords on both sides of the Zagros ridge, by the victories of the Hakkari and Buhdan clans over the Nestorian Christians. I arranged our little cavalcade in such wise, that Mirza Ali, who had possession of the firman, was always obliged to

ride some distance a-head with the guide, so as to hold parley with the Koords we might meet this side of the Dschagatu, to show them the peaceful nature of our journey, and the authority under which we travelled. The Pole, Saremba, and the Armenian, Pilosch, were to keep by the horses, and never lose sight of them, while the Persian, who joined us at Binab, closed up the rear. I found it expedient, on my own part, to ride frequently aside, and reconnoitre the country, and as I had the best horse, I could easily stay behind the caravan to make observations. But I never parted with my gun. Ere we left Binab, all our fire-arms were carefully examined, for it is well known, that the Koords hold nothing more in awe, than European arms, with which they made unpleasant acquaintance in the Russo-Persian war, and to which they had nothing to oppose, but bamboo lances and bad matchlocks. The Koords are sharp observers and good judges, and are clever in weighing chances and profit against loss. Unless the scale descends heavily in favour of the former, the traveller has not very much to fear among the tribes, partially subject to Persian and Turkish authority, though the feeling of security is never complete in Koordistan.

To the south of Binab, a solid bridge with five arches, carries you over the Maragha, a stream which is reported in spring, to fill the whole of its bed, and to rage furiously, but which is so dry in autumn, that it scarcely sends down any water to the lake. After a ride of three hours, we reached the banks of the Dschagatu, which rises in mountains higher than the Sahant, situated to the south, and forming a continuation of the Zagros chain. This river, after flowing for the space of about one and a half degrees of latitude, falls into the southern marshes of Lake Urmia, and it still forms the principal limit between the tribes speaking Koordish, most of whom are Sumnites, and the Turkish speaking tribes of Aserbeidschan, who are, commonly, Shiites. Though belonging to the same race, the villages of these opposite sects of Moslems, seldom admit members of the opposite creed among them, though both parties allow a large admixture of Chaldaean Christians, and Devil-worshiping Yezidees. I halted on the right bank of the river, and whilst men and cattle were taking refreshment, I bathed in the stream, which had still a

good amount of water, but which could be easily waded in most parts. After a short rest, we crossed the border river of Persian Koordistan, and the scenery changed character directly. Even viewed from Daschgesan, the Alpine Lake, though its Eastern shore is a dreary solitude, yet it is of a very picturesque character. But after passing the Dschagatu, the scenery becomes continually more desolate, and near the Takan rivulet, flowing farther to the south-east, these swampy bottoms present a most gloomy monotony.

After we had ridden about three hours, without meeting a single person, we beheld, at length, some black tents, in the distance, surrounding ruinous buildings, and a band of Koordish horsemen returning from the pastures, with their herds. The black Persian lambswool caps had disappeared, and we were again brought in contact with bright coloured fur caps, and fiery red turbans.

The lynx eyes of the Koords appeared to have already discerned us, before we had caught sight of their tents. A magnificent chieftain, with a noble profile, a bushy raven black beard, and a prodigious load of variegated shawls

wound round his fur cap, rode down with some horsemen to meet the cawass. Whilst Mirza Agassi was parleying with them, I counted the pack horses, and contemplated the group with my telescope, at the distance of one hundred paces. To my annoyance and surprize, I observed that the behaviour of the cawass, was as cringing as that of the chieftain was haughty and supercilious. Mirza Agassi held in his hand the firman, which the Koord could not read, and the seal of which and signature he carefully scrutinized.. After an interview of a quarter of an hour, Mirza Agassi rode back to us, and assured me that Kamir-Aga, the nephew of the real chieftain of the clan, bade us welcome in his uncle's name. He added, that we could now confidently rely on the hospitality of the Koords. For it is well known that these thievish shepherds, respect, like all Orientals, the sacredness of guests in their tents. When we hear of robberies and murders, in Koordistan, we may be sure, that here, as in Armenia and among the Bedouins, they never take place in the villages, or near the

tents, but on the roads, where the sacred rights of hospitality do not extend.

The aged chieftain, Schader Aga, a man far advanced in years, with a wan withered face, received us in the midst of the assembled population, with the usual dignity, never absent from Easterns in authority, even though they be barbarians and robbers. Carpets and pillows had just been spread on the ground for our reception, and the chieftain pointed to us, with polite gestures, to be seated, but intimated to me previously, to pull off my boots, according to the usage of the country. Though I was very reluctant to sit down, for fear of the vermin, which fill the furniture, clothes and hair of Koords, even more than of Persians, I thought it necessary to yield, and not to affront these savages. The stern look, and rough guttural tones of the old grey beard, who was still a sturdy man, though almost stone deaf, had nothing very reasoning about them. The Pole found it at first, very difficult to carry on intercourse with the old chief, in Turkish, and the services of the cawass, who knew

a little Koordish, had to be occasionally resorted to. I soon ascertained that we were brought in contact with the Mukri Koords, old friends of Ker Porter, who had visited them thirty years before. As a matter of personal security, I was obliged, like the British traveller, to play the part of a hakhim, in order not to make these people suspicious about the object of my journey. A physician disposed to distribute his physic, and to search for healing mineral streams, gratis, is never an unwelcome guest among the Koords, for though this people are commonly healthy and muscular, they are as subject to disease, as the Bedouins of the Desert, and the Swiss on their Alps.

Scarcely had I opened my chest, ere I was applied to by a host of patients. Many were afflicted with incurable maladies, but even a Koordish woman, who had been completely lame for ten years, and who was carried to me on the brawny arms of her sons, hoped still to obtain new legs, by some miraculous mixture of the Feringhi doctor. I was obliged to give her some strong preparation, to quiet her importunity. Every real or imaginary

patient was immediately satisfied, when he received pills or powders from the medicine chest. Even aged men, suffering from the decay of nature, pressed my hand gratefully, and gave me their blessing in Koordish, when they had sucked down two drops of essence of peppermint on sugar, and had experienced its comfortable effects on the stomach.

Whilst I was engaged in distributing the physic, the old Schader Aga, had carefully observed me with his sharp, stern eyes. When all had been dismissed, he said to the Pole: "I think that God hath sent thy Lord the hakhim to me, to help me to recover my hearing. Let him try his art. We will gladly keep you with us, so long as you like. We will prepare kaimak daily for thy Lord, and roast a lamb every Friday. Nor shall you others want for pilaf and yaourt, or your horses for good fodder."

The Pole interpreted to me the wishes, and invitation of the chief, and returned him my thanks, with the remark that European medicine, notwithstanding the great confidence placed in it in the East, has not yet devised any means of curing the deafness of a feeble old man of

eighty. But Schader Aga was not at all satisfied with this rejoinder, and thought that my well filled medicine chest, must contain some specific for deafness. He became continually more pressing in his demands, promised us a freshly slaughtered lamb, and savoury kewab for supper, and at length threatened, not to let us go, without our finding a cure for his hard hearing.

We, therefore, proceeded to consult together, and hoped to rid ourselves of the troublesome importunity of the old Koord, by an innocent expedient. At my suggestion, the Pole stopped his ears with wool steeped in olive oil, after I had previously told him in a loud voice, that during the first part of the treatment, I prescribed, he would not hear at all well, but that on persevering with it, he would find a decided improvement. A couple of spoonfuls of the best cordial that I had, mixed with *eau sucrée* made the old man tolerably contented. He assured us in the evening, that he already detected a better appetite, and hoped it was the sign of an improvement in his deafness. On hearing this, we had some difficulty in preserving our gravity, and the Pole was once

very near betraying our deception to the physic loving chief, by an untimely explosion of mirth.

After we had sat some hours together, and had smoked the tschibouk of peace, the excessive curiosity of the Koords diminished a little. The cawass and the Pole inquired about the road, through the passes of the Serdascht mountains, forming to the S. West of Sauk Bulak, the outliers of a southern branch of the Zagros chain, and which we proposed to cross in a few days, in order to reach the territory of the Hakkari. Kamir Aga, the nephew of the old Koord, and his heir presumptive, as the chief had no children, described the country as most dangerous, and the Hakkari and Rewandoz tribes, as most ferocious and blood-thirsty, advising us strongly not to attempt to penetrate through those passes.

When I returned from a short walk, I found kewab and pilaf prepared, and my people awaiting my arrival with greedy, hungry looks. The old chief reproached me for having wandered so far alone. He intimated that he was not only answerable for my safety to the Sardar, but also to God. He stated that there were

not only many wild beasts in this country, but bad men who have no scruple to take the life of a single wanderer. On my replying, that I trusted, next to my good star, in my faithful gun, the old man wished to see a specimen of my marksmanship. I showed him some snipes that I had shot, which excited the wonder of the Koords, as not perceiving the shot holes, they thought I must have hit them with bullets, in their tortuous flight. When I hit a slender tree at thirty paces, with my pistol, young and old joined in their applause. Kamir Aga begged me to give him my pistol, and when I told him I could not spare so useful a weapon in my travels, I was obliged to promise to send him a pair from Europe; for which he was ready to pay any price.

The evening terminated with a general prayer. Old Schader Aga ascended the little tower of the ruinous house, which stood in the middle of the camp, and judging from its substantial architecture, was of very ancient date. The aged chieftain, who acted at once the part of Muezzin, and Mollah, summoned his congregation, with the loudest efforts of his roaring bass voice, to devotion, then

descended the tower, and recited the prayer, standing with uncovered feet on the carpet, facing the south. The whole male population of the camp followed his example, and the ceremony was repeated in the morning at sunrise. Even if we had slept sounder after the exertions of the day, the thundering voice of Schader Aga, resembling the howling cry of the dromedary, would have effectually roused us.

After the conclusion of the morning prayer, there was great movement in the camp. The young Koords drove the cattle to pasture, after the operation of milking had been accomplished by the women. The horned cattle looked small and thin. Six Koordish cows scarcely yield as much milk as a good Unterwalden cow in Switzerland; nor is the milk here half as savoury as in the Alps; at the same time, the cattle of this country are more hardy, and procure their own fodder in winter by scraping the snow. Few Koords practice hay-making, nor do they ever keep their cattle in stables.

Schader Aga was in excellent temper, in the morning. The Pole had drawn the wool out of his ears, and the old chief fancied that he

already heard decidedly better than the day before. We were obliged to leave him a supply of wool and oil, and the old fellow besought me urgently for a bottle of that wonderful elixir, which had done his stomach so much good the day before, and had nerved his aged limbs with new life. As a bribe, he laid before us the remains of our supper, and caused coffee to be prepared for us, but begged us to give some sugar to sweeten it.

The impudent obtrusiveness of the Koords, was, this morning, more annoying even than the previous evening. They not only wanted medicines, but bottles, and boxes with them, and testified no gratitude for any presents. Kamir Aga, who had hitherto abstained from importuning us, when he saw the wonders performed in the case of his uncle, confided to my interpreter, that he was suffering from a certain physical debility, and wished to increase his powers by some means. When you contemplated the splendid athletic figure (above six feet high), of this Koord, who was in the prime of life, and seemed scarcely forty years of age, (no Koord knows his age exactly), you could not avoid astonishment at this confession. I recom-

mended him the use of baths in the salt and iodine waters of the Lake Urmia. This simple treatment did not appear to satisfy the chief. He had spoken to me the previous evening of a mineral spring, which coloured the surrounding ones red, and probably contained oxyde of iron. He now proposed to me, to accompany me to this spring, as I had raised his hopes of recovering his pristine vigour by the use of this kind of water. He described the spring, as situated aside from Tasch Tebe, half way to Sauk Bulak. I accepted this proposal, and after my people and horses had breakfasted, I rode off with him and another Koord, in a south-westerly direction.

Our farewell to the Mukri nomads, and old Schader Aga, was very characteristic of Koordish ways. I offered him four sahefgerans, as a compensation for his hospitality, not so much from generous motives, as to test the delicacy and hospitable feeling of a Koordish chieftain. It was amusing to observe the comical expression of the old man's face, betraying the conflict between the commands of religion, the consciousness of his duties as host, and the meanest avarice, and love of lucre. He and his

people had emptied a good part of my medicine chest, and conceived that they had derived from me mixtures of wonderful healing virtues. It was evident, after that, that the old Koord had not expected an additional compensation for his somewhat shabby entertainment. Hence, the surprise was all the more agreeable. At first, he pretended not to accept my offer. But, whilst he rejected it with his hands, and some unintelligible words, his eye became rivetted still more greedily on the four silver pieces. At length, he mechanically stretched forth his withered hand, as though impelled, by some irresistible power, and the silver instantly disappeared in the ample folds of his caftan.

The two Koords led us by an abominable road, through endless morasses, without a trace of a beaten track. Lofty marsh plants, reeds and broom, sometimes overtopped the horsemen's heads, and excluded all prospect of the plain. Whilst the Koords carried on an unintelligible dialogue in their tongue, Kamir Aga's hawk's eyes were so often fixed on the pack horses, that dark suspicions were excited in me, and in my people. Being perfectly ignorant of the localities, we were entirely in the power

of these barbarians, and were constantly afraid of being enticed into an ambush, where there would have been no escape. As we were so small a body, notwithstanding our superior fire-arms, we could have offered no effectual resistance to a large force of Mukri Koords. They might have thrown our bodies into the neighbouring marsh, without leaving a trace of the crime, and the Sarder Behman Mirza, however well-intentioned, might have been quite unable to avenge our death. After we had ridden for two hours through the marsh, which is tolerably well-defined in the map, between Tasch Tebe and Terochsad, to the south of Sauk Bulak, our horses waded, breast deep in the water, and we attacked our guides with bitter reproaches, for having brought us into this dismal wilderness. The reedy thickets were here so dense, that all view was entirely shut out; and, I confess, that I have never seen in all my travels, any uglier country than these muddy parts, to the south of Lake Urmia.

At length, our indefatigable horses worked through the wet, reedy thickets, and we came to a tolerably dry meadow, with a free prospect

of the south-west mountains of Koordistan, and of the wide marshy plain, reaching to the banks of the lake, which we were prevented from seeing by a low range of hills, checking the course of the waters, and causing these marshes.

Ere we reached the place designed by Kamir Aga, we were joined by two other mounted Koords. This unexpected meeting with two other long-lanced warriors in the pathless waste, increased our suspicions. When the Koords began to curvet on their steeds, and to wheel round our pack horses in narrowing circles, and with loud shouts, though it was, probably, only to display their horsemanship, I told the Pole to be on his guard. During his many years' experience of Eastern life, he had learnt to mistrust the natives, and feared, like myself, that the Koords might, at any moment, convert this comedy into something serious. Suddenly, Kamir Aga, spurring his grey mare into a swift galop, dashed, with lance in rest, towards the Pole, who presented his double-barrelled piece at the Koords, as if he wished to join in the fun. Kamir Aga, thereupon, broke into a hearty laugh, wheeled round his horse, and

dashed, full speed, pointing his lance at me. I presented both my pistols at him, quick as light, showing the Koords, that both myself and the Pole were quite prepared to convert the joke into a serious matter, if they thought fit. With screams of laughter, the Koords dropped their lances, and swept round our caravan again in wide circles. The whole display presented a considerable analogy to the fantasia of the Bedouins in Algeria, who had often delighted me with their picturesque displays. Kamir Agar looked also, very splendid, with his handsome, energetic face, and aquiline profile, reminding me of the handsome hero of Caucasia. The Koordish chieftain was not inferior to the most imposing warriors I had seen in the Atlas and Caucasus, in horsemanship, war-like bearing and picturesque draping of his ample cloak. His companions appeared to less advantage. A common type is wanting in the Koordish physiognomy, and everything seems to point to a strong mixture of races, as with the Kabyles of the Atlas.

At length, we reached the spot where a fine chalybeate spring gushes from the soil. The surrounding soil was tinged with a yellowish

red deposit of oxyde of iron, which occurred in such abundance in the water, that two moderate glasses gave me a headache. I caused the pack-horses to be relieved of their burdens, and turned loose to feed; but I cautioned my people to be on their guard. This spot was beset by hosts of birds of many varieties, which were so tame, that they had probably never heard a shot fired. At the first report, which brought down one, there was some confusion; but it was only after the second shot had deprived of life another, that they flew away amazed and screaming. The Koords never kill any bird; and, thinking that I fired with ball, they made me undeserved compliments. I left them purposely in error.

Kamir Aga, who had taken large draughts of the spring water, in hopes of increasing his procreative powers, now took leave of me, and returned to the camp with his Koords. He informed the Pole, that he had shared in the last Russo-Persian campaign, and had commanded the cavalry of the Mukri clan. At that period, the severe government of Feth-Ali-Shah, and of the chivalrous Allah Mirza, had secured greater respect and obedience

among the wild border tribes, than the present imbecile ruler and administration.

From Kember-Koi (the name of this district) we rode through a pathless waste, to Sauk Bulak. It is only in the vicinity of this capital of Persian Koordistan, that the country becomes somewhat more agreeable. The marshy plain passes gradually into a dry hilly country, and the mountain streams flow in regular channels. Sauk Bulak lies at the southern end of a green valley, contains about six hundred poor stone hovels, and a population of two thousand souls, most of them of Koordish descent. The number of Nestorians amounts scarcely to fifty families. During the absence of the chief Abdullah Khan, absent on a pilgrimage to Mecca, the administration was in the hands of an old Mollah, who was not very hospitably inclined. He quartered us in the miserable house of a Nestorian; and though he could read my firman, he would do nothing to forward my plans. It was my purpose to advance from Sauk Bulak to Tokta and Jeltomar, and to the Serdascht mountains, there to take a strong escort, and go over the Darn pass to the mountain village of Runemassi, situated in an

elevated valley near the source of the Zab-Asfal. Thence I proposed to push through the *terra incognita*, to the Northern Hakkari district, and to the Zab Ala, proceeding through Rewandoz and the passes of the Dschawur Dagh, and returning to the west bank of Lake Urmia.

The chief of Sauk Bulak, to whom I imparted this plan, pronounced it impracticable. The menaces of the Pacha of Mossul, because of the overbearing attitude of Beder Khan, who seemed to aim at an independent sovereignty in Koordistan, had alarmed all the tribes. Nurullah Beg, the chief of the Hakkaris, who had persuaded Beder Khan to make his incursion into Dschulamerk, was afraid of the Turkish Nizam, who could reach the Zab Ala in two days march, and advance thence easily to Rewandoz. These threatening reports had increased the naturally and proverbially savage and surly character of the Hakkaris. The Mollah said, that all travellers, even from Persia, would be regarded as Turkish intruders, and cut down; and he added, that all the excitement in the whole district was so great, that a journey over the Darn pass, even with

a strong escort, would be a dangerous exploit.

My interpreter obtained information from the Nestorians and Armenians of the town, which confirmed the statements of the Mollah. They represented that the country had formerly been more tranquil, but that no Christian native had of late passed through the Hakkari territory to Rewandoz. The only mode of intercourse between them and their fellow-believers in the Hakkari land, whose Patriarch holds sway over all the Persian Nestorians, was the pass of Dschawur Dagh, to the northwards. Mirza Ali heard the same statement from the Koords of the town, who represented the Darn pass as very dangerous.

The following morning, I resolved to make a reconnoissance to the foot of the Serdascht mountains, led by a Nestorian, and escorted by six Koordish lancers. I was accompanied also by the gallant Saremba, who said he was ready to face any dangers ; nor can I sufficiently praise the fidelity of this brave fellow, whose services I recommend to future travellers attempting to unravel the mysteries of Kordistan.

The mountains near Sauk Bulak lack vegetation. There are no woods, and little verdure. We passed the night between Beiran and Hassan Agas, in the tents of a small Koordish encampment of the Bilbos tribe. They were poor people, who had nothing to offer us but yauert. Their faces were very wild and ugly; and their attire very ragged. Our Koordish escort gave us a feeling of sufficient security. We also became gradually accustomed to the thievish look of the natives, without always suspecting evil intentions. These shepherds could give us no information respecting the state of the country, the other side of the mountains. The next day, after a ride up a steep declivity, we reached the ruinous border fort of Serdascht, whose commandant, Abas Khan, a Koord, annually supplies escorts for Suleimanieh.

This fort lies on the green slope of a mountain of the same name, on the left bank of the Ak-su rivulet. Abas Khan showed himself ready to give me an escort of ten horsemen, who would guard me safely over the mountains. But he also told me, that it was impossible to penetrate into the valleys north of the Zab Asfal, through the Hakkari district

to Rewandoz. He added, that the Hakkaris robbed and murdered even men of their own faith; much less would they spare Christians. When I found it impracticable to proceed to the north-west, I resolved to give up my attempt to visit Suleimanieh, to return to Sauk Bulak, and thence cross to the south-west bank of the Lake Urmia.

When we returned, the next day, to the Koordish capital, we found my Persian and Armenian at table, in the house of my Nestorian host. Neither of them had neglected his inner man; and the poor Nestorian, who had scarcely enough to support himself and his family, complained of their dreadful appetite. My host, even the evening before my departure, expressed very frankly his anticipation, that I should make him a handsome present for his compulsory hospitality. The cawass feigned great delight at my safe return, adding shrewdly, "For who would have paid me the tomans for my services, if the Koords had murdered thee?"

The following day we proceeded in a north-westerly direction, and after a ride of four hours, we beheld once more, the surface of

Lake Urmia, presenting a brilliant reflection of the blazing mid-day sun, in the slightly undulated mirror of its thousand waves. We came here close to the bank, and I was able to make some observations on its formation, and on the shells cast up by the lake.

We passed the night in the village of Balista, two miles from the lake. Part of the village is built on the slope of a mountain, surrounded with walls, and forms a kind of fortress. We again saw here, for the first time, some fine tall timber. The landscape of this basin, is adorned with thick stemmed mulberry trees, shooting up in mighty shafts, and extending their giant branches over head. The view is fine and open, on the side of the lake. Most of the inhabitants are Koords, and there are about fifty families of Persians, who speak Turkish, for the nearer you approach the town of Urmia, the more does the Koordish population give way to Persians and Nestorians. The pastures on the mountains, become here more scarce, but cultivation increases in the plains. The other side the river Burrandusz, the wild faces and picturesque costume of the Koords, disappear in the plains, and only

occur in the higher ridges of the border mountains of Persia and Turkey. The Burrandusz forms the western, and the Dschagatu, the south-west boundary of Persian Koordistan. The Koordish tribes of this district, really or nominally subject to Persia, are geographically connected with their countrymen and clansmen, in the broad Turkish district, between the Tigris, Lakes Van and Urmia and the southern plains of Mesopotamia. The Koordish nationality is almost predominant, in this extensive territory. But in Eastern Aserbeidschan, the Koordish population is more scattered, forming, as it were, islands surrounded by the Turkish and Persian races.

After passing the Burrandusz-tschai, the great fertile plain of Urmia presented itself in its most blooming attire. All the villages were enclosed by a broad garland of trees and fields. We halted for our noon siesta, at the village of Barbari, in a charming situation, close to the Dschagatu. The larger half of the population, consists of Nestorians, the minority being formed by Armenians and Chaldæan Catholics. We were not amicably

received by the population, and a Nestorian, in whose shady garden we wished to repose, refused down-right to receive us. This was the first inhospitable behaviour I had to complain of, since quitting Tabris. Even the wild Sumnite Koords ; had given us a ready shelter under their tents ; whilst here, Christians would not even let us rest under their trees.

Mirza Ali cut the matter short, by quietly thrashing the Nestorian with his whip, and then showing him the firman of the Sardar. Henceforth, indeed, the cawass displayed a certain brutality, which, occasionally, called for my serious interference. He had, generally, behaved politely to the Persians on the Eastern bank, and his conduct was even cringing towards the half independant Koords. But he seemed inclined to make amends for his previous self-command, and to gratify his Persian love of cudgelling, on the oppressed Christians of the Urmia plain.

It must be owned, that this uncouth treatment, had a good effect upon the Nestorian. He became suddenly cringing and fawning, and not only allowed us to rest

in his garden, but brought us his fruit for our refreshment. He sought to excuse his previous uncivil behaviour, by pleading the frequent and oppressive visits of Persian functionaries. He said that they never expected to receive any compensation from them. Indeed, the people were generally happy, when those unwelcome guests took leave, after satisfying their appetite, without damaging the garden, or insulting their host. He ended by saying, that they were riddled with taxes, and that he had to pay forty tomans yearly, to the Persian grandees, for the rent of his orchard.

When the heat had somewhat moderated in the afternoon, we rode off to the large Persian village of Turkman, twelve miles south of Urmia, and situated among charming vineyards and orchards. We stopped there for the night, taking up our quarters in the garden of a wealthy Persian. The trees were bent under the weight of savoury apples, which were of moderate size, but of delicious taste. I here met with an adventure, which formed a somewhat entertaining variety, in our rather monotonous wandering life.

After consuming my pilaf, I lay, wrapped in my burka, half dozing, when I was roused by the sobbing and sighing of a man, whose figure I could not well recognize in the dark. At first, I did not notice the matter, and hoped the noise would soon cease. But when the sounds of lamentation increased, I called my interpreter, to learn the man's trouble. The Pole informed me, that he was the son of my Persian host, whose wife was at the point of death. They had heard of the arrival of a Frank hakhim, and nothing but a shy reserve had deterred the Persian from disturbing my rest, and begging me to accompany him to his house. I followed the man readily, as I hoped, by this accident, to view the interior of a Persian harem. The Pole had to bring my medicine chest with us, and we followed the young weeping Persian into the inner court of a house, where there stood a group of female forms, of various ages, in handsome domestic attire, surrounding an apparently fainting woman, lying stretched on a carpet and pillows, with closed eyes. She was a very pretty young woman, twenty years old at most,

and a roll of variegated silk was wound round the graceful tresses of her long hair, only concealing her forehead. Singularly enough, her complexion was not pale, as commonly with those in a swoon, and her pulse beat regularly. I caused iced water to be brought, an article seldom wanting in Persian houses, sprinkled the pretty face of the fainting woman with it, and held at the same time, a bottle of spirits of sal ammoniac under her nose.

At the same moment, the fainting woman opened her black eyes, jumped up in terror, and, with a loud cry, covered her face when she beheld two strange men in their singular costume. An old woman tore away the veil from the young woman, and addressed her in an animated tone, saying: that she ought to show her face to the stranger, who was a hakhim. The other women smote their breast, exclaiming, God has sent this hakhim to us to save her ! All, including the men of the family, seemed almost to think it a resurrection from the dead, though they might easily have employed the same simple treatment themselves, which so soon brought back the patient to her senses.

The pretty patient looked at us still very shyly, with her timid gazelle eyes, but did not oppose my taking her pretty little hand, to feel her pulse.

I caused them to give her another glass of iced water, and then left them, after thus easily earning their profound gratitude. We returned to repose sweetly through the mild August night in the apple garden. Pilosch and the cawass, who had already heard of the medical miracle, filled their bags with splendid apples, which they regarded as a just contribution for the advantage our host had derived from my curative skill.

CHAPTER VIII.

Arrival at Urmia—The American Missionaries—Residence at Seir—Excursion to the Border of Koordistan—Visit to the West Bank of the Lake—Monuments of the Fire Worshippers—The Nestorians—The Destruction of the Nestorian Republic in Dschulamerk — An Episode of recent History in the East.

WE reached the town of Urmia, which gives its name to the great lake, the following day at an early hour. The Beg quartered us at the house of a Nestorian woman, whose husband was absent on business at Tabris. Urmia, is a considerable town, containing 30,000 inhabitants, chiefly Persians, and in a pleasing situation. It is encompassed by walls and beautiful orchards, which penetrate even into the heart of the town, and separate the houses from each other. The bazaar is lively, but far inferior to that of Tabris in size, variety of goods, and entertaining

sights. The town appears deficient in antiquities. Its early history is obscure, but Abulfeda mentions it as an important city.

Since 1831, North American missionaries have settled at Urmia, not to convert Mahommedans, (all who know the East are aware that this is impossible,) but to disseminate their doctrine among the Chaldean Christians, including under this term the Nestorians, and the united Chaldeans. The American missionaries were followed by the French lazzerists, who remarked that the West bank of Lake Urmia, was a promising field for the propaganda. The apostolic activity of Pater Garzoni had already embraced a great part of Western Asia, and had wrought great effects there. The Protestant missionaries of Basle had also made attempts to evangelize the Chaldeans, but appear to have been sooner discouraged than the North Americans, not having renewed their attempt since the departure of Haas, Horle, and Schneider, in 1837.

Scarcely had the American missionaries heard of my arrival, ere they invited me to visit them at their summer residence. The bearer of the message was a German, who had almost

lost the use of his mother tongue, during his protracted peregrinations in the East. He had brought a handsome horse provided for me by the Mission, and the spirited animal carried me at a merry gallop, beside my guide, to the missionary residence.

Seir, the summer residence of the Americans, is scarcely four miles from Urmia, in a very picturesque and charming situation. The dwelling consists of a uniform building of one story, about fifty paces in length, not unlike a barrack, inclosed by a wall flanked with four towers, and covering the upper terrace of a hill, from which the eye commands a wonderful prospect of the vast, blooming plain of Urmia, with its three hundred and sixty villages, its rivers, gardens, plantations, as well as the salt lake, extending here a full degree north and south. This picture is heightened by the bold chain of mountains advancing or receding from the lake, and of which the Eastern and Western chains attain an Alpine height, being covered with snow most of the year. The outer wall of the residence incloses, moreover, a vegetable garden, orchard and vineyard, and is strong enough to defy a thousand Koords. Yet, such

a massive construction testifies to the vicinity of savage, robber hordes ; nor can the gentlemen of the mission ever feel quite secure. For, if a similar Koordish irruption to that which destroyed Dschulamerk, (1843), were to sweep over the Albur's chain, and smite the Nestorians in the Persian plains, the Beg of Urmia would be powerless to resist it. Even if the Nestorians of Urmia had time to rush to the rescue of the Mission, and to defend themselves behind its strong walls, they are too much wanting in energy, too unaccustomed to military service, and too habituated to oppression, to effect any daring exploit, or to rival the gallantry of their countrymen, the *Tijaris*, who, yet, were unable to defend themselves against the Sumnite Koords behind stone walls.

Three of the clerical inhabitants of Seir, were married, each of them enjoying the society of an agreeable wife and blooming children, who had not been robbed of the roses on their cheeks, by the Persian climate. Mr. Perkins seemed to be superior in character and intellect to his colleagues, who are, however, eminent for piety and virtue. Three of these, Messrs. Holtey, Stoddart and Stacking,

were at Seir, and three Messrs. Johns, Marrick, Prad, and the physician, Dr. Reith, resided at Urmia, but were then on a visit to Seir. A readier and livelier pen would be requisite to depict the charms and features of this missionary residence, its pious inmates, the amiable housewives, the lively Judith, daughter of Mr. Perkins, the Nestorian beauties of the vicinity, with their picturesque costumes and their Oriental fire-darting eyes, the cooing of the doves, the rapping of the wood-peckers, the melodious sighing of the breeze, descending from the Koordish mountains, and agitating the trees in the garden—in short, the whole idyllic scenery of this missionary dwelling, of which the impression was doubly grateful, after long tribulations among deceitful Persians and rascally Koords.

The plain of Urmia is almost fifty miles long, and eighteen broad, and the eye embraces nearly its entire surface from Seir. Its extraordinary productiveness, is secured by the abundance of waters, descending from the snowy Koordish mountains, nor have I ever seen, even in happy Lombardy, a more careful cultivation of the soil, a more judicious system

of artificial irrigation, or a denser population. The vast area presents an endless series of villages, gardens and fields, as far as the eye can reach, offering considerable analogy to the richly cultivated banks of the Lake of Zurich, though it lacks the palatial farm-houses, the cleanliness and comfort of the Swiss, as well as the blessing of their political liberty. Poverty, misery, and famine are rampant in this Persian paradise. Its unfortunate inhabitants, besides having to pay 65,000 tomans to the State Treasury, at Teheran, are fleeced by the scandalous robberies, and oppression of the Persian *employés* and nobles, to whom the caprice of the Shah assigns the villages. The poor people here as in the Nile delta, can scarcely save enough to keep their families from starving, and many are afraid to eat the eggs laid by their own hens. During an excursion that I made to the northwards, the parents refused me fodder for my horse, though their barns were full of corn, and though offered a good sum. They stated that they did not dare to give one ear of corn; before their Lord had examined, and taken his share of the harvest.

On the second day of my residence at Seir,

I made an excursion with the missionaries to the border mountains of Koordistan. All the gentlemen were capitally mounted, nor have I ever seen throughout the East, a finer horse than the snow white mare, of Mr. Perkins. Each movement of the beautiful animal, which had cost a considerable sum, was full of grace. It looked to the greatest advantage, when kneeling down to drink. It showed equal expertness to the best Koordish horses, in clambering over the rocky declivities, and in the plain it left them far behind it. The missionaries who receive considerable sums from the American society, for the propagation of Christianity, not only live comfortably, but even luxuriantly, as was testified by their stables, which were almost filled with horses of all Oriental breeds.

The mountains west of Urmia, forming the watershed of the Zab, and of the tributaries of Lake Urmia, follow a south-east and north-west direction, peculiar to most mountains in Asia. The ridge is called Alburs by all the Nestorians, and its highest summit, Scheidan-Dagh, (Devil's mountain.) The Aju-Dagh, (Bear's mountain) appears the next highest

summit, and another mountain covered with a thick mantle of snow, was called Hertschin-Dagh. The greater amount of snow in these mountains, shows that they exceed in elevation the Sahant chain, cutting the blue ether with their rocky peaks, on the opposite side of Lake Urmia. Judging by the eye, the height of the Alburs ridge, must amount to 10,000 or 11,000 feet. Their lofty precipices intercepted the view of the highest mountains of Koordistan, which in the summits of the Dschidda and Dschawur-Dagh, near the border of the Hakkari Koords, and of the Chaldæan Tijari, attain from 13,000 to 14,000 feet, (according to Monteith, 15,000,) and are crowned with everlasting snow, and glaciers. This ridge forms nominally the frontier between Persia and Turkey. But the truth is, that these highest districts, as well as the more elevated uplands, including the verdant slopes and higher vallies of the Barandusz. Schaher-tschai, and Nasslu-tschai, which water the plain of Urmia, together with the Northern valleys of Salmas, and the ravines watered by the tributaries of the Zab, are not inhabited by Persian or Turkish, but vy free and independant Koords, settled in villages, or roving about, and

undisturbed by tax-gatherers of Pachas, or Sultans. In the deeper recesses, among the mountains, are poor villages, whose inhabitants are mostly of Affscharic descent. The Affschars, who perhaps constitute the most numerous tribe of Western Asia, speak a corrupt Turkish dialect, and probably have a principal admixture of Turkish blood in their veins, though it is most likely blended with Koordish and even Persian elements. From this race, now sunk into absolute impotence, sprang Nadir Shah, perhaps the mightiest conqueror presented in Persian history.

I must omit my geological researches in this district, which showed me the very volcanic formation of the country, and which excited much interest among the American missionaries, who accompanied me in many of my excursions. The plain of Urmia is not only intersected by minor cross ridges, and broken by solitary elevations, but it presents a series of artificial mounds, resembling the Mohills of the Russian steppes, only more capacious, and not of a conical shape. These mounds near Lake Ormia, are covered with black earth, meadows and grass. When you dig through the mould,

you discover many earthen utensils, human skeletons, and animals bones, broken pottery, copper and silver coins, mostly from the times of Roman supremacy, and a few of the Persian æra.

We visited two of these mounds near the village of Degalu. I could trace, at this place, the vestiges of grand excavations, caverns, a hundred paces in length, where it was evident that search had been made for hidden treasures. The common result of such excavations, is the discovery of some silver coins. And in the most unsatisfactory cases, the earth ashes which always occur, and are useful as manure, offer some compensation for the trouble of the excavations. The natives give no other name to these artificial mounds, than Tepe, and the current traditions refer them to Zoroaster, the Magi, and the fire-worshippers.

On the 30th of August, a boating excursion was proposed, Mr. Perkins having politely hired a boat, which, on certain days, sails from the western to the Eastern bank of Lake Urmia. The previous Governor of Urmia, Malek Kassim Mirza, a younger brother of Abbas Mirza, and uncle of Mohammed Shah,

had built the vessel at his own expense. This Persian Prince, who walked partly in the footsteps of his deceased brother, and who had acquired a taste for European institutions and fashions, spoke English and French with fluency, and was partial to intercourse with Europeans. He was a complete enigma, and I heard as much evil as good spoken of him, by the Europeans residing in Aserbeidschan. Though Malek Kassim had dropped the embroidered Persian caftan, with its hanging sleeves, and donned a scanty frock coat of European cut, he had not dismissed Eastern vices. Enlightened nobles in the East, are not unfrequently anxious and impatient to borrow our inventions, the evident wonders of our industry, even our scientific researches and speculations, and to domesticate them on Islam ground. It is only the morality of Christian Europe, the principles of humanity, of patriotism and honour, which have fundamentally done more than the Gospel, to advance the acknowledgment and practice of cultivation and freedom, in European countries; it is only these higher influences, which find no

admission in the East, and least of all among the corrupt grandees of Persia.

Some years before my visit to Urmia, Malek Kassim had been driven from his appointment, by the intrigues of his enemies at the Court of Teheran. Nothing could have saved him, but a rich present to the Grand Vizier, Hadschi-Mirza-Agassi. But the Prince had squandered all his money, partly in foolish industrial experiments, to which he had been prompted by the ignorant quacks surrounding him, partly in excesses and luxury. The poor people had been no less oppressed, misused and fleeced under this civilized Governor, than under his barbarian predecessors and followers, who did not read Lamartine's philanthropic poetry, or speak French elegantly like Malek. Almost all the technical improvements that he had introduced, were already gone to the ground, including the navigation of the lake, which had passed from bad to worse. When we reached the banks of the lake, no vessel was forthcoming. It lay at the 'Horse island,' almost in the middle of the lake, and was reported to be leaky and damaged. The

boats here in general, were described to me as clumsy, and neither safe nor swift, notwithstanding their size. Lake Urmia might easily be navigated by light boats, as its heavy salt water is only agitated by the most violent hurricanes. The breakers are reported seldom to attain the same force, nor are the waves so large as in Lake Van. The Armenian missionaries possessed a boat, which lay in the little bay, near the rocks of Besan-Dagh. When we arrived at the spot, we found nothing but a heap of ashes. The natives had set it on fire, probably to obtain its nails and iron. In this manner, our last hope of a sail had vanished away in the smoke, and we were obliged to rest satisfied with a cold bath.

If Lake Urmia were in the centre of Europe, our physicians would, probably, send thousands of their patients, who could derive no benefit from the whole pharmacopœia to Lake Urmia, and who knows if a plunge in its waters, might not renovate them. I, at all events, can affirm, from personal experience, that ten baths in the German Ocean, do not create so much stimulus in the skin, or so

much exhilaration in the nerves, as the water of this lake, which holds so much more salt and iodine in solution, than even the Dead Sea. You come out of its waters as red as a crab, and, moreover, greatly invigorated and refreshed. The Urmia baths would have this farther advantage over the North Sea, that its waves are not in the least dangerous, even in storms. For, independently of its shallowness (it is only six feet deep, two miles from shore,) so great is the gravity of the water, that the slightest movement of hand or foot, keeps you afloat. Stout men who stretch themselves full length on its surface, float without making any effort. Natives, however, are said never to bathe in the lake.

The natural character of the banks, is the same here as elsewhere. It is only in a few places that you can reach the water, without wading through dark green salt slime and plants, piled up almost all round the lake. The statement that there is no animal life in the lake, is erroneous. I admit, that neither fish nor mollusca live in its waters, but it has an immense number of crustacea, of a peculiar description. I lost all my specimens of them,

notwithstanding my care to preserve these little black creatures, which, probably, belong to a new species.

To indemnify me for my disappointment about the sail on the lake, Mr. Perkins proposed to visit the large Nestorian village of Gödipe, situated two miles from the lake. His colleague, Mr. Starking, was just engaged in preaching in the vicinity. On the way, we met a great many Nestorians engaged in reaping or thrashing the corn. They wear the Persian costume, but their sun-burnt faces appeared to me to have a gentler and more amiable expression than those of the Moslems in this country. The missionary was everywhere greeted in the most friendly manner.

The men left their work, approached us, and after laying their hands on their breast, in the Eastern fashion, answered the cordial American shake of the hands by another. Even the girls and women saluted him familiarly, but respectfully. Some of the young women, whose health and roses had not been injured or dispelled by labour and exposure, had comely forms and complexions, their sturdy beauty being enhanced by their picturesque costume.

At Gödipe, we entered the house of a priest, who seemed to be on a very intimate footing with Mr. Perkins. We were received in the most cordial manner; and all the delicacies of the Nestorian *cuisine* were laid before us. The lady priestess did not belong to the most charming of her sex; but she was an excellent cook. More attractive than our hostess was the young, blooming, classically beautiful wife of the missionary servant John, a most engaging person, not only handsome and elegant, but very richly attired. She had only enveloped her chin and lower lip in a white cloth; and we were able to make a careful scrutiny of the remainder of her face, as she waited on us most amiably; and our eyes dwelt with pleasure on her fine skin, delicate complexion, half Grecian nose, rich black tresses, and splendid eyes. Like the lady priestess, she wore an amber necklace round her neck, to which a number of Russian coins were attached. The young husband, who had accompanied us, dwells apart from his youthful bride, in the missionaries' house; but he is allowed to see her three times a-week. He seemed quite delighted to be able to pass two extra hours to-

day, with his pretty wife. Oriental jealousy does not appear to be a predominant characteristic of these Nestorians. John requested his wife to be very polite and friendly to the foreign guest. She showed me all her finery and ornaments, and gave me, as a remembrance, one article which she had embroidered with her own hands.

John was a very good-humoured young man, and appeared really pious and faithfully devoted to the missionaries, without interested motives. Europe and America were, to his mind, the promised lands, which he would gladly have visited. He confessed to me his longing to see them, and begged of me to help him to satisfy it. He would even have left his pretty wife for a couple of years, with this object. The other missionary servant, a converted Jew, who had been my guide to Seir, hinted slyly that it was not so much the devout impulse of a pilgrim, which prompted his friend John to visit Europe and Christendom, as selfishness and ambitious aspirations. He implied that the shrewd Nestorian fancied that, if he knew the English tongue better, he could play the part of Messrs. Perkins and Starking among his coun-

trymen. And surely, America's evangelical apostles, who are so splendidly remunerated, and the wealthy members of the Philadelphia and New Orleans societies, who have never yet raised their voices against negro slavery, and the hunting down of the poor red skins, by rifle shots and blood-hounds, but who pay many hundred thousand dollars to support their useless missions in the East—these inconsistent Yankees might venture the attempt to let native Orientals preach the Gospel, according to their favourite forms, and at their own cost. As a missionary servant, John was a very unimportant personage in the land. But as Missionary, and supported by the mission fund, even the higher clergy would have paid court to him, which was enough to excite the ambition of the Nestorian youth.

After our meal, we received a visit from the venerable Bishop, Mar-Ilia, who, notwithstanding his silvery beard, was still a man in the prime of life, well-conditioned, and with full ruddy cheeks. His bearing was very dignified, his eyes kindly, his manners well bred, and especially polite and attentive to the missionaries. He wore a fiery red Bishop's cap,

hanging down behind like a Capuchin's cowl, and with a variegated cloth worn round it like a turban. The rest of his dress had nothing remarkable, but consisted of fine material. Since the patriarch of Dschulamerk had sought refuge at Mossul, Mar-IIia exercised supreme authority over the Nestorians in Persia. He had good reasons for showing civility to Mr. Perkins, and allowing him to preach, without interference, the Gospel, according to Presbyterian views, for he received a considerable subsidy from the Mission, exceeding, by twice the amount, the income he received from his congregations. The same motive applied to the priests of lower degree, whose cringing politeness to the missionaries was sufficiently explained by their poverty, their love of lucre, and their monthly salaries. I was much interested, on this occasion, in the information imparted to me by the Bishop, relating to the transactions in the Hakkari territory and Dschulamerk, and respecting the social condition of the Nestorian people.

We shall confine ourselves, for the present, to a few remarks on the Christian commonwealth, in the district of Koordistan, which had

maintained its freedom since time immemorial, among the rocky precipices of the Zab valleys, and which perished in 1843. The origin of the Nestorians, as a nation, is uncertain. The hypothesis of the Amercian missionary, Dr. Grant, (the only educated traveller who has penetrated from Mossul, through the Zab valleys, to the most inaccessible parts of the Hakkari and Dschulamerk territory), that the Chaldæan Christians are the last tribes of Israel, is deficient in authentic historical evidence. They call themselves Nassrani, often adding the epithet, Suriani, signifying Syrian Nazarenes. Professor Rödiger pronounces their language to be a common Armenian dialect, and he regards this modern Syrian as a mongrel offspring of the ancient Syriac.

The two Christian sects of the Nestorians and Jacobites in Western Persia, and Turkish Koordistan speak this peculiar idiom, which recent researches class with the Indo-European languages, and its structure is said to be most similar to the Persian. A complete mystery envelopes the origin of this people, nor do history or tradition throw any light on the manner in which they occupied their present isolated

position, in the midst of Turkish and Koordish tribes. Plenty of theories have been hazarded on the subject. Padre Gazzoni gave us the first information of this Nestorian people. Then came Rich, Monteith, Walsh, Eli Smith, and recently Grant, to whom we may add Layard. The church of Rome styles this people Chaldæans, and it appears, that at an early period, they adopted the doctrine of Nestorius, who was deposed A.D. 1439, on account of heretical opinions. The peculiar position of their country on the borders of the Byzantine and Sassanide Empires, removed them from the influence of the great church, and they remained Nestorian heretics in their primitive form, perhaps the only sect that has retained its originality. This sect is scattered in isolated groups over a large part of Asia, almost to the borders of China. In Persia and Koordistan they appear in twelve separate districts. The most numerous tribe consist of the Tijari, in the mountain region of Hakkari, inhabited by Christian and Koordish clans, and containing the capital of the Nestorians, called Dschulamerk, to the north west of the Zab Ala, and giving its name to the whole Christian republic.

Their spiritual as well as temporal ruler, is the patriarch Mar-Schimon, who, previous to the Koordish incursion of 1843, resided at Kotsch-Hanes, four miles from Dschulamerk, and afterwards at Disz, a fortified village. Even the Persian Nestorians acknowledged him to be the head of his church. Yet the intercourse between them and the metropolis, and patriarchal see was very limited, because of the insecurity of the intervening country. The united members of the Nestorians, between the Tigris and Lake Urmia, are variously estimated; but the American missionaries reckon them at seven thousand, of whom the Tijari composed about one half, before 1843.

There are conflicting opinions respecting the character of these Nestorians. In the highlands of Koordistan they are wild, brave, and grasping; in fact, they resemble the Koords, amongst whom, in many places, they live intermingled. The breeding of cattle is their principal occupation. In the plain of Urmia, on the other hand, they are farmers, and have adopted under Persian sway, both the cowardly, servile, lying, and deceptive character, together with the polished, and insinuating manners of the

Persians. The American missionaries received immediately a hearty welcome from the Nestorians, because they saw that these foreigners would be a useful bulwark against the tyranny of the Persian grandees, that their reports forwarded to Tabris, and Teheran would have some weight, and that they would benefit them as protectors, or at all events, mediators in cases of extortion. Meanwhile the missionaries showered their gold with a liberal hand, and not only taught the youth gratis, but gave them a weekly gratuity. They did not interfere with the liturgy in external devotions of the Nestorians, nor sought to effect any change in their religious ceremonies ; they testified their respect for the historical character of Nestorians, of whom the clergy knew little, and the people nothing, and they made friends of the high and low clergy, by liberal donations.

The American Mission cannot boast of splendid results in relation to the improvement of morality, stimulus by virtuous examples, or the advancement of culture. Even Mr. Perkins admitted this, and thought that almost all hope must be given up, in the case of the present

generation, and that all attention should be devoted to the young. Of all the exertions of the missionaries, their gratuitous instruction of the young is least appreciated. Each bishop receives, from the Americans, a monthly allowance of three hundred Turkish piastres, and ordinary ecclesiastics from a hundred and fifty to two hundred piastres. On the condition of this allowance being continued, the Nestorian clergy permit the missionaries to preach in their villages, to keep schools, and to interpret to the youth the principles of Christian morality, which are neither taught nor practised by the native clergy. Without this payment, or bribery of the priests for a good end, the missionaries could not maintain their footing in this country. Even the peasant is only carrying on a pecuniary speculation, in sending his child to school. Each scholar receives, weekly, a sahefgeran ; and though this gift is small, the schools would become directly empty, if it were to cease. The institution at Urmia, costs the North American Missionary Societies above fifty thousand dollars annually, and the maintenance of the other Missions in Turkey, three times that amount. Yet, if we except a few

Jews, won over from motives of gain, these expensive establishments have made no converts. An English clergyman, whom I once met in my travels, remarked, very justly, in connection with this matter, that the Americans might direct their efforts at conversion, with better success, and with less cost, in their immediate vicinity, among the heathen red-skins of the Far West, instead of sending their missionaries with immense sums, to the Mohammedan East, where Christianity has not gained one inch of ground in Islam. Every person acquainted with the East, is aware that all attempts to convert the Moslem, in the present day, are quite fruitless. Among the Eastern Christians, indeed, the Christian missionaries may find hearts that admire their virtues, and misery grateful for relief. But the results obtained, bear no proportion to the sacrifices that are made.

The Americans are regarded by the Christian, as well as Moslem natives, as very worthy and virtuous, but also as eccentric men; or, to speak plainly, a kind of virtuous fools, who have been impelled by a pious madness, to leave their homes, and roam over lands and seas.

It requires some time for the natives to arrive at this view of the missionaries' character, which was not unfavourable to the object of their mission. For, at first, even the Christians, including the priests, were rather shy and suspicious ; and the Persians and Turks were convinced, that the foreigners only wished to conceal political objects under religious appearances, and that they were political emissaries of England. On a nearer acquaintance, and after much intercourse, these suspicions were dissipated, for the missionaries did not meddle with politics, and devoted all their spare moments to scientific pursuits. It is only among the naturally very mistrustful Persians, that all sparks of suspicion may not be even yet quite extinguished.

The American missionaries at Mossul, established an intercourse with the Nestorians of Dschulamerk, and the Hakkari territory. Dr. Grant succeeded in visiting these people in 1839, and was most hospitably entertained by the Patriarch, Mar-Schimon, in Katsch-Hanes. He even visited Dschulamerk, which was said to contain twelve thousand inhabitants. He described this " wild, but noble-minded highland

people, as at that time in the full enjoyment of liberty and consciousness of their strength. They informed Dr. Grant that no enemy had ever dared to invade their mountains; even Mohammed, and Omar, the conqueror, had not been able to penetrate into their fastnesses. He only found one wish prevalent among them all, namely, that they might be affiliated with, or incorporated in a great Christian power, which could help them with its troops. Dr. Grant was of opinion that the numbers and bravery of these Tijaris, would make them a valuable accession and acquisition. Even Ritter, after reading the report of Dr. Grant to Colonel Shiel, at Teheran, was disposed to think that this branch church and people, so neglected by its parent churches and rules, may become of great importance amidst the decay of its Moslem neighbours.

Unfortunately, recent events have not confirmed these anticipations. The chieftain of a Koordish tribe has effected what Mohammed and Omar never accomplished, perhaps because they did not think it worth the trouble. Nurullah Bey, chief of the Hakria Koords, and successor of the one-eyed Mustapha Khan, of Rewandoz, whom Reschid Pacha, took prisoner,

is a savage, warlike, thievish Koord, who had long lusted after the rich booty of the Christians in the Upper Zab valleys. Though these people were poor in comparison with the inhabitants of large cities, and fertile plains, yet they had a goodly property, and especially fine herds of cattle, a sufficient attraction for a Koordish robber prince.

Nurullah Bey considered himself strong enough to attempt alone his daring stroke against these Christian inhabitants of the highest snowy mountains, whose warlike character bore a higher reputation than it deserved. Accordingly, the Bey of Rewandoz requested the more powerful chief, Bedar Khan, ruling over all the clans of Budhan, to share in the exploit.

The power of this fanatical and enterprising chieftain, was so generally dreaded throughout Koordistan, that even the Pacha of Mossul was afraid to meddle with him. Shortly before the incursion of Beder Khan, into Dschulamerk, this Koordish chief met the Pacha by appointment, on the banks of the Tigris. The latter came to the spot with an escort of six hundred regular troops, and was, perhaps, more

frightened even than surprised to see the tents of the Koords, who had brought six thousand armed men along with him. The Pacha, who did not betray any symptom of alarm, despatched pressing private orders for cannon, and a reinforcement of Nizam, nor did he recover his courage, till they arrived. The Koordish chief, and Turkish Pacha, had a long interview, and parted as friends, and the Nestorians think that the incursion into Dschulamerk was secretly determined in that conference.

Dr. Grant, who was aware of the project of the Koordish chieftain, strove to avert the calamity. Peacemaking or mediation is a noble office, worthy of the Christian missionary, and the journey of Dr. Grant, through the most unruly Koordish tribes, to the residence of Bedar Khan, in order to prevent a fearful massacre, redounds more to his honour, than all his researches about the lost tribes of Israel. Bedar Khan received him courteously, smoked the tchibouk with him, and ate out of the same dish with him. The Nestorians said, on this occasion, that the "lamb had dined with the lion."

But the eloquence of the apostle of peace was not able to damp the fanaticism of Bedar Khan,

the revenge of Nurullah Bey, who had a feud with the Nestorian Patriarchy, or the thirst for plunder, shared with them, by Mohammed Khan, from Lake Van, their third colleague.

The British agents in the East, indeed, maintained that the Nestorians of Tijari, were not worthy of the interest shown them by Sir Stratford Canning, Colonel Shiel, and the missionaries. Messrs. Brandt and Stevens described them in a very different light from Dr. Grant, representing the Tijari to be just as rough, wild, and thievish, as the Koords, and that their patriarch was no better than Nurullah Bey. They added, that mutual robberies had been practised on each other by Koords and Nestorians for many years, and that no one could pronounce who was in the wrong.

Many writers have even conceived that the Nestorians, under their spiritual ruler, have been more impudent thieves than the Koords, under their temporal chiefs; but this opinion seems exaggerated. For to judge from the bad reputation attaching to Nurullah Bey, throughout the mountains, it does not seem probable that he was the victim of the Christian Patriarch. It is probable that the truth lies, as usual, between

these extreme opinions. From all I have learnt about the Nestorians, they seem a little better than their thievish neighbours, and though they may practice retaliation, it is excused by necessity. It is, however, always difficult to learn the truth in those countries, for Orientals are masters in the art of dissimulation, and the Europeans, who visit them, are rarely unprejudiced and penetrating observers.

It is clear, that although Messrs. Brandt and Stevens may have been unjust in charging the Tijani and their Patriarch, as men of thievish and violent propensities, the American missionaries attached much more importance to them than they deserved. These people, who pretended that they had bid defiance to the greatest conquerors, could not even resist the invasion of a horde of Koords. Nor do the letters of the Patriarch to the Mission at Urmia, give a high idea of his cultivation, being a tissue of flattery, hypocrisy, and full of a low grasping spirit.

The band of Nurullah Bey began their attack in the district of Disz, where the Patriarch then resided. Though the Nestorians had long been aware of the intentions of the Koords, they

allowed themselves to be surprised, and made but slight resistance. The Patriarch only thought of his own safety, and ran away, leaving his mother and brothers to be butchered, with thousands of other Nestorians, in the cruellest manner.

Mr. Stevens maintained that the obstinate irreconcileable character of the Patriarch, was a principal cause of the catastrophe. Instead of manfully facing the storm that he could not allay, and crucifix in hand marshalling his flock for resistance, and inspiring them with religious zeal, the holy man found it more expedient to gallop off to Mossul, leaving his people to their fate. The numerous horses of Bedar Khan, and Mahomed Khan, followed those of Nurullah Bey, and blood thirsty plundering bands, overrun the whole Nestorian district.

The smoke of the burning villages, eddied up over the snowy mountains, and the screams of injured women were mingled with the shouts of the victorious Koords. Neither the helplessness of age, nor the innocence of childhood, found any mercy. Almost half the Tijari fell in the massacre. Part of the survivors fled to Persia, many thousands remained as prisoners in the

hands of the Koords. The village of Sespatoi was the only place that offered a heroic and a desperate resistance, and all, save five or six who escaped into the steepest fastnesses, fell defending themselves.

When nothing more remained to be destroyed, the murderers and plunderers, retired with their captives and booty: many of the boys being circumcised and forcibly converted to Islam.

Bedar Khan left Zaiual Bey to govern the depopulated district—a desperado surrounded by a band of the most determined Koordish villains. All who escaped his clutches fled into Turkey.

The Pacha of Mossul played a double part during these transactions. He neither supported nor prevented the operations of the Koordish bandits. It is probable that, in the consciousness of his weakness, he was not sorry to keep aloof, and look on during the humiliation of the Christians. When the thundering notes of Sir Stratford Canning roused him to action, he sought to reconcile Bedar Khan, and the Patriarch. Mr. Stevens was sent on a special mission to Mossul, to give weight to the demands of the Porte. Under his influence, the Pacha was obliged to reinstate the Patriarch,

and procure the liberation of his children, which was refused by Bedar Khan, on the plea of their being Moslems.

Matters were in this position during my stay in the country ; and a few months later, the Koords graciously allowed the return of the Patriarch and of his followers to their own country. But they could not restore its prosperity. A depopulated and ruined country could not be rendered flourishing by any amount of firmans or diplomatic interference. The Nestorians will never lose the memory of their defeat, or the Koords of their triumph, and this remarkable Alpine republic has virtually come to an end. As regards the final act of the bloody drama, it may here be added, that the grey-headed old murderer, Bedar Khan, who attempted to force the Nestorian children into Islam, was soon after dispatched by the hand of a renegade.

The Catholics in the plain of Urmia, speak the same modern Syrian dialect as the Nestorians, with whom they are connected in type and manners. They have, at various times, receded from the doctrine of Nestorius. But though the Catholics of Urmia acknowledge the Pope, and have divine service recited in Latin, they

mingle many Oriental ceremonies with it, nor are they more devout or virtuous than the old believers. Their priests marry like those of the Catholic Armenians, and Maronites, the Holy See having been obliged to make this concession. Celibacy would be even much more difficult to practice in the East than in the West, nor could the poorest herdsman or mechanic, be induced to enter the priesthood, if he were forced to give up the thoughts of family. Among the Nestorian priesthood, celibacy is only required among the highest dignitaries. Children are selected for these dignities, at a tender age, and they commonly consist of Bishops' nephews.

Eugene Boret, of the Lyons society, established a Catholic Mission at Urmia, being stimulated by the apparent success of the American missionaries. But he overlooked the fact, that their triumph was the reward of their liberality, and that the moment their bribes ceased, their services and schools would fall to the ground. The French Lazzarists, whose funds were much more limited than those of their rivals, have made little impression. They admitted to me that they were quite crippled for want of means. Money which every where exerts a magic

influence, is the great enchanter in the East. In Persia, this magnet can even overcome the hostility of race and creed, nor does any man in any country, find so many friends and adherents as the Persian dives. Hadschi Baba had already disclosed the fact to us, and his judgment still applies in full force.

CHAPTER IX.

Travelling Plans — Adventure in a Persian House — The North-west Shore of Lake Urmia — Gertchin-Kaleh — Journey back through Salmas and Choi to Bajasid.

I HAD passed some pleasant weeks in the devout and friendly sphere of the American missionaries, whom I had learnt to esteem and love, and whose Christian piety and Presbyterian devotion are entitled to all praise. Nevertheless, even their American hospitality was rather dearly purchased at the cost of four hours per day, devoted to prayer-meetings and solemn litanies. To a travelling naturalist, especially, this seemed a loss of time; and the wilds and mountains appeared to offer a nobler exercise than a perpetual attendance on theological lectures. The comforts, good cheer, and con-

versation of the missionary ladies, the pretty Nestorians, and even the lovely head of little Judith, at length, lost their attraction ; and I returned to the town of Urmia, where my people were still lingering in the house of the Nestorian woman.

It was necessary to devise a new travelling plan. I ascertained that it would be impracticable for me to attempt to reach the sources of the Zab-Ala, over the border mountains. The difficulty did not consist in the natural impediments presented by the country, but in its political state exclusively. It would have been much safer to trust to the magnanimity of a hyena, than for a travelling European to confide in the hospitality of Zaiual Bey, commanding the Upper Zab vallies. The missionaries advised me to cross over to Turkish ground, under the escort of a Turkish cawass.

Mirza Ali, who had given splendid examples of cowardice among the Koords, agreed entirely with the missionaries. He seemed tired of the journey, and anxious to retire with his golden earnings ; and my other people appeared also shy of any farther adventures. Accordingly, I

resolved to pursue my journey along the north-west bank of the lake, and to proceed by Salmas to Bajasid, whence I hoped to explore the Ararat, the Murad-tschai, and, perhaps, to deviate into Koordistan, and the unknown regions near Lake Van.

The day preceding my departure from Urmia, I encountered an adventure of the most singular description, nothing of the kind having occurred to me elsewhere during my residence of five years in the East. It was also so utterly at variance with the experiences of other Europeans, and with the customs of Mohammedans, that I long tortured my brain to explain this abnormal occurrence, which could probably only find a solution in the local character of the town of Urmia.

The little Nestorian house that we occupied at Urmia, had a circular corridor of moderate dimensions, overshadowed by the friendly foliage of some plane trees. The wall separating this corridor from the neighbouring house, was ten feet in height, and also shaded by lofty trees. On the very first day of my residence, I had remarked in the neighbouring court, several curious women, climbing up or

down a ladder they had placed against the wall or the trees, and who looked into our corridor, attentively scanning all our doings, with their coal black eyes. As these women were not the most engaging, that we had seen in the East, I did not, at first, pay much attention to them. I conceived they were Nestorians, who seldom scruple to disclose their features to stranger Christians. But when I learnt from our hostess that they were Persian Shiites, I was surprized at this forwardness, so contrary to their national customs.

As I saw them perpetually ascending the ladder, to stare at the stranger, I asked them in Turkish, "if they would also allow me to climb the tree." They consented, smiling, and kept quite quiet. When I adjusted the ladder, I saw other prettier and better dressed women and girls in the court; I then asked them "if I should descend to them in the court," they replied that they would place a ladder against the terrace of my house, and then I could come down to them. The Pole, as well as the Persian cawass and the Armenian Pilosch, had overheard the conversation, and

were astonished at the facility of these women. I acceded to their invitation, but not without some precautions; I concealed my kinschal under my cloak, and directed the Pole to keep watch on the terrace, with a pair of pistols, and to rush to my rescue, if the adventure took a bad turn.

All the houses of Urmia, are of one story, and have flat roofs, like those of most southern countries. I might have jumped from the terrace, into the garden, without dislocating a bone. I preferred, however, to step carefully down the ladder, into a very pretty flower garden, when, to my utmost astonishment, I was immediately surrounded by a dozen women, all young, and many of them pretty. The domestic costume of Persian women, is not so becoming as the Turkish, but it is more pleasing than the monotonous wrappers worn in the street. Two of the women had young infants in their arms, which they handed to me quite familiarly. They asked me several questions, and wished especially to know "if I was an ecclesiastic, or a physician?" Unfortunately I could only understand a very little of their conversation,

I managed, however, to ask them "if there were no master at home?" "Oh! yes, our master is there with our mistress in the court," replied the girls, whom I now discovered to be slaves or attendants. I followed in the direction pointed out by the girls, and stepped under an open porch, whence I looked into a second court or garden, planted with plane trees.

A handsome Persian, with a long black mustachio, was seated there, smoking on the divan cushions, and a handsome young woman, richly attired, and with painted cheeks, was reclining in the eastern fashion, by his side. The handsome pair looked very dreamingly into the green canopy, or blue vault over head, without noticing me. But, leaning against the wall, close to the porch, was another Persian, holding a tschibouk in his hand, and keeping his eye fixed upon me, but without showing a vestige of anger or surprise. He asked me, in a very quiet tone, "if I liked the place?" and on my assenting, he added,

"Come again to-morrow, and view the house. Mirza Mehemed is now taking his kef, and does not like to be disturbed."

I saluted the Persian, and passed back through the court to my quarters, accompanied by the attendants. The girls returned the pressure of my hand quite warmly, and told me, I must come back the next day. The ladder had been untouched, and the Pole was still seated, with cocked pistols, watching from the wall. Nor was he a little surprised, when he heard of my strange adventure.

The Turkish speaking Persians of Aserbeid-schan, who are much less cultivated than the Persian speaking people of Iran, though they are more courteous to Europeans than the people of Anatolia, yet they have still more antipathy to Christians, as may be seen in their practice of never eating out of the same plate with them. They are, also, less hospitable, allow less freedom to their women, and do not readily admit strangers in their houses. The general character of the inhabitants of Western Persia, was represented to me in this light, by men familiar with them. In the towns and villages, where there is a considerable admixture of Christian population, fanaticism is mitigated, and the freedom enjoyed by the Nestorian women, has made the lot of the

Persian women more durable. This tendency may be peculiarly developed in the town of Urmia, whose population is peculiarly cultivated, and friendly to Europeans. Nor have the American missionaries contributed a little to create a favourable opinion of Franks, by their virtuous lives, liberal alms, and gratuitous instruction, even of Mohammedan children. Every traveller in Frank costume is regarded at Urmia, as a missionary, or a physician; and this might explain the mystery of my adventure. I was afterwards informed, that the same Persian had inquired all about me, from Mirza Ali, who had told him of my wonderful cures, and that I had restored a dead woman to life. His extravagant respect for the Frank hakhim, may have accounted for my free admission, and my friendly intercourse with the Americans, who are much esteemed, may have secured me a ready access. But, in any case, the adventure was very extraordinary, and gave me considerable insight into some Oriental ways, which are still, in a great measure, a closed book to Europeans.

On the 13th September, we quitted Urmia, and proceeded along the banks of the lake. The

road brought us to a branch chain, beyond the Nasslu-tschai, running down to the water, and separating the great plain of Urmia, from another smaller one, less fertile and cultivated. A fine new stone bridge of four arches, leads over the river to Tschunguraleh, a considerable village, with many orchards, having a large Tepe near it, in which several antiquities have been found. It is ascribed to Zoroaster and the Magi.

Our first night quarters were in the village of Guschtschi, eight leagues from the town of Urmia. The place is inhabited by very inhospitable Mohammedans, who received us sullenly, and to whom the cawass behaved in a cringing manner, perhaps, because they were Afschars, and had an admixture of Koordish blood in their veins. The vicinity of the free Koordish district may contribute in making the people here rather refractory, nor do the Persian nobles venture to hold so tight a rein here, as in the heart of the country.

On the following day, we pursued our journey along the north-west bank of the lake. The ground was broken, and the banks were higher than on the Eastern side. The village of Gertchin-Kaleh has received its name from an old

castle, built on a high promontory, overhanging the lake. This edifice, which I visited, stands on a limestone rock, perforated with caverns, and though it is considered by some to have been the treasury of the Mogul Emperor, Hulaku-Khan, its real origin and purpose are involved in mystery.

Near the grottoes, I noticed a fine clump of fig trees, the only ones I saw in this region. The view from the summit of the rock is very fine, embracing the lake, islands, and mountains.

On the 15th September, after a ride of two hours, we reached the head of Lake Urmia. The weather was splendid, but the heat was still very intense. We passed through the fertile district of Salmas, rested at Alsaret about noon, and stopped for the night in the village of Hamsa-Koi, near the town of Dilman.

The next day, we reached the town of Choi, and passed the night in a caravanserai. The remainder of my medicine chest was here emptied, by the importunity of the Persians, who never thought of paying for their drugs. I parted also with Mirza Ali, the cawass, who received a goodly pile of tomans, and having

quite recovered from his disgust in Koordistan, delivered a long parting oration, decorated with all the flowery periods of Eastern rhetoric. We travelled on rapidly from Choi, to the Turkish border ; and after a ride of three days, we reached the village of Killissa-Kent, where we obtained from the Persian governor, an escort of Koords, consisting of two men, to Bajasid ; the paucity of our numbers being thought a greater security, by not engaging the attention of the robbers. I heard, afterwards, that the escort had received instructions to represent us as the precursors of a larger caravan, and this stratagem was well adapted to procure us immunity by the fear of chastisement so near at hand, and the hopes of more attractive booty following at our heels.

We passed several stone huts, once peopled by Armenians, who had emigrated across the Araxes to Russia. We were also hailed by Koordish shepherds from their black tent ; but no accident befel us. At the top of a high pass, the mighty Ararat burst upon us in all its glory, filling up the whole background with his glaciers, whilst the splendid marble rocks of Bajasid formed the side-scenes. We soon after reached this Turkish border town.

I have described this second visit to Bajasid in my work on Russian Armenia, together with my visit to the southern side of Ararat, where I narrowly escaped being murdered by the Koords, by clambering over the rocks and hiding in a cave. The fright and fatigue of this excursion brought on a fever, which forced me to give up all further attempts to explore this district; and I proceeded to Erzeroum, where I arrived in so weak a state, that I only recovered very slowly in the hospitable French Consulate; and even when breathing the fresh breezes of the Euxine, I was still subject to returns of the complaint, which adhered to me for years, and defied medical skill after my return to Germany.

CHAPTER X.

Latest Events in Persia—Herat, Past and Present—The Political Importance of Khorasan and Herat—Russia's and England's Position in Central Asia—Probable Consequences of an Encounter between the two Great Powers in Asia—Russian Bias an Heirloom with the Mongolians—British Power in India—The Future—The Attitude of Affairs in the Caucasus and Koordistan.

SINCE the termination of my three years travels in the Caucasus, Koordistan, and Persia, events have come to pass, which, though they have not essentially altered the state of politics in the East, have yet exercised a considerable influence over it. I purpose giving a slight sketch, at the close of this outline of my wanderings, of the existing state of affairs.

The paralytic monarch of Persia, Mohammed

Shah, the unworthy son of the promising Abbas Mirza, had sunk a victim to disease, and the sceptre passed into the hands of his feeble son, without the numerous uncles, great uncles and cousins of the young Shah, making any attempt to wrest it from him. The cowardice of these claimants to the throne, being still greater than their ambition, as was seen after the death of Feth-Ali-Shah.

In 1837, the young Shah, then Crown Prince, and a child of seven years old, saw the Emperor Nicholas at Erivan, and was caressingly dandled upon the knees of that colossal monarch, and graciously titillated with the tips of the imperial moustachio. Even at that tender age, the successor to the Persian throne imbibed a profound impression of that august personage. The Cossack and body-guards, the thunder of artillery, and the whole military pomp, with which the Czar surrounded himself on that side the Caucasus, created so vivid an effect upon the imagination of the young son of Iran, that it annihilated for ever, any ambitious projects in a north-westerly direction, which he later might have formed.

Ambition and thirst for glory, are, however, the customary attributes of youth. At twenty, even an Oriental monarch, to whom every sensual pleasure is early offered, and as early exhausted, has his imagination inflamed by the traditions of the glorious deeds of his predecessors. Moreover, it has never been forgotten at the court of Persia, that the paradisiacal frontier district, near the Herirud, was once one of the costliest pearls in Persia's diadem. The memory of Nadir Shah is hated, because he was not of the race of Kadschars, though the reigning dynasty would gladly follow in the footsteps of that great conqueror, who vanquished Affghanistan and pillaged Delhi.

The Grand-Vizier, Hadschi - Mirza - Agassi, the old crack-brained cannon-caster, and collector of tomans, fell, as the first victim to the change of rulers. He owed the preservation of his guilty head to the more humane spirit of the age, and, perhaps, in part, to the intercession of Russia, by the sacrifice of his treasures.

The friendly relations with the court of St. Petersburg did not appear in the least disturbed by the downfall of the Vizier, who had so long

governed and plundered the kingdom, in the Russian interest, nor did the poor people gain in any way by the change, for, according to very reliable information from Tabris, oppression and robbery are as much practised as ever. The appointments to the posts of governors and subordinate offices, as well as the purchase of villages, including the poor inhabitants, and all things appertaining to them, are still offered to the highest bidder. In the province of Aserbeidschan, extortion and exaction have increased to such an extent, that even Oriental apathy or endurance might well be exhausted.

The death of the Governor of Herat, Jar-Mohammed Khan, who had snatched the crown from off the head of the imbecile Kamran-Schah, during his lifetime, renewed the old claims which the Persian dynasty had at all times raised for the annexation of Khorasan. An army, the flower of which was composed of the regular troops organized by Colonels D'Arcy and Drouville, and by Major Lindsay crossed, in the year 1837, the frontier of Persian Khorasan. Notwithstanding the numerous alterations, or deteriorations (as it may be,) which the British officers employed by Abbas

Mirza, and which still more recently, the French drill masters Damas, Seminot, Delacroix, and Pigeon have introduced in the regular forces, the cadres have held together, even after the dismissal of these European officers.

In spite of the very defective organization of these Persian troops, they have a decided advantage over the still more undisciplined corps of the Affghanistan princes. Financial ruin, disorder in every branch of the government, and palsied energy exist to a more hopeless extent, in Cabul and Candahar, than even in Iran, and thus the easy successes of Persia can be accounted for. In the year 1838, Herat made a long and successful resistance against the Persian expedition ; but from the latest accounts, the town seems this time to have opened her gates, almost without a blow, to the small force, which after assembling at Meschid, was sent against her.

The confusion and helplessness which ensued upon the death of the clever and energetic Jar-Mohammed, may have led to this result. Conolly describes Herat as being strongly fortified. The town is surrounded by an earth wall, and a ditch supplied with water, which

enclose an area of about three quarters of an English mile. Each of the five gates is protected by a fort; on the north side of the town stands a strong citadel, surrounded by a deep moat. From the description of Delacroix (who was a competent judge,) the Persian artillery is still in a wretched condition, notwithstanding the numberless cannon, which the old Hadschi caused to be manufactured in Teheran, and from the complete inexperience of the Persians in the modern art of besieging, it cannot be supposed that they should succeed better this time than in the year 1838.

From the great political importance of Herat, as one of the intermediate states, which at present prevent the concussion of the two great powers, I imagine that I may be rendering a service to my readers in putting together a few details respecting Herat, which I have gleaned from the different travellers of this century, from Christie to Conolly.

Herat is the capital of the state of the same name, and situated on the eastern border of the tableland of Iran, it was celebrated even in antiquity, as the capital of Khorasan (Artacoana), or the Blessed Place. All Oriental authors, without exception,

from Abulfeda and Ebn Batula, in whose time it had not yet arisen out of the heap of ashes to which the destroyer Genghis Khan had reduced it, emulate each other in celebrating its glory and magnificence. "Khorasan is the muscle fish of the world, and Herat is the pearl," says a Persian proverb, which certainly, after the idea a European has of a beautiful town, seems a most exaggerated conceit. Like most Oriental towns, the interior consists of a labyrinth of narrow, dirty, dingy lanes and alleys, which in many cases are nothing more than dark passages overshadowed by little narrow houses, such as only an Eastern can find pretty or habitable. There are four large covered bazaars which contain 1200 shops, and in which are concentrated all the life and movement of the town.

The usual accompaniments of all Eastern cities, such as dung heaps, stagnant pools, and every kind of putrescent matter, are not wanting in the streets of this "Pearl of the world." From Conolly's description, Herat is still dirtier than the dirtiest parts of Constantinople, Cairo and Tunis; and in the superfluity of the fifth element, (mud) even

a Polish village cannot rival it, and which, nothing can exceed, but the Cossack towns of Neu-Tscherkask and Ekaderinodar.

Herat, like most other large Oriental towns, owes neither to any peculiar accident, nor to any political circumstances, nor to the caprice of any of its rulers, with a building mania; its position and existence, as either Rome, Berlin or St. Petersburg. The attraction has been the remarkable fertility of the surrounding soil, and the freshness of its oases, which occupy the centre of the large and arid plateau, in the middle of Asia. Thus the celebrated beauty of Herat, consists, like that of Broussa and Samarcand, of a luxuriant girdle of the most exuberant vegetation, which encircles this filthy town. The Persians have named Herat, on account of these blooming gardens, "the town of the hundred thousand gardens."

The broad valley through which the river Herirud flows, whose waters are absorbed by the sands of the Turcoman desert, without one drop reaching the sea; is covered with the most lovely fruit and flower gardens, vineyards, fields of grain, groves of beech, and villages; whilst

crystal springs and babbling fountains rise out of the verdant soil. In the opinion of Orientals, the waters of this valley surpass in purity, coolness and refreshing qualities, all the other springs of Asia, only excepting those of Cashmire. The climate is temperate, and only such kind of fruit thrives there, as is indigenous in the cooler zones. The palm and the sugar cane, the orange and lemon groves of a warmer clime are completely wanting. Conolly mentions a singular custom of the inhabitants, who, in order to enjoy fruit in perfection, eat it from off the trees, instead of buying or selling it at the market. Each person, therefore, who visits any of the surrounding gardens is weighed both on entering and on leaving it, and is expected to pay for the difference of weight.

The magnificent edifices which all the ancient Oriental writers describe as having formerly embellished this regal city of Herat, have fallen into ruin, or have become completely buried under the soil. Historical catastrophes, such as the ravages which Mongolian and Persian conquerors, at different periods, inflicted upon the city, changed it into a heap of ruins, from which, however, it always rose again,

phœnix-like, from its ashes. The reason of this is to be found in the ever unexhausted blessings and riches which nature has so abundantly lavished on this fruitful neighbourhood, and which have never failed to draw back to it a fresh supply of inhabitants, both agricultural and mercantile—the latter being attracted by the position of Herat on the high road between Persia and India, and as being, on that account, an advantageous centre of commerce.

The royal garden of Herat, Bagh-Schai, as Hammer calls it, was once considered, even in the East, as one of the wonders of the world. It is now desolate, and its palaces in ruins, as all modern travellers attest.

The ruins of Mussalah “the place of devotion,” near Herat, are very magnificent, though in the most extreme state of dilapidation. It was erected by one of the Timurids, for the reception of the relics of the Iman Reza, but never completed; and in consequence of disputes and litigations, the bones of the saint were taken to Meschid. Conolly thought the style of building in Herat, grander than in Meschid. He describes long colonnades decorated by a mosaic, in white quartz and tesselated bricks.

The entrance of these colonnades is adorned by a lofty cupola, supported by arches and columns, and surrounded by twenty minarets. The highest of these he ascended by a flight of one hundred and twenty steps, and had the most exquisite view over the widely extended gardens and cultivated ground, which reminded him of the loveliness of an Italian landscape.

The chief exports of Herat are saffron, asafctida, pistachio nuts, mastich, manna, a peculiar yellow dye or paint called ispiruk, and a gum named birzund, besides a great deal of dried fruit, and horses to India. Silk is also produced in the neighbourhood, but not in sufficient quantity for exportation. The iron and lead mines might be made exceedingly profitable, but they are extremely ill managed, as Kamran Schah acknowledged to Dr. Gerard. Fraser says, that excellent swords are manufactured at Herat, which have the beautiful ringing sound of the Damascus blades, Timur having had a colony of armourers brought from thence. Conolly praises the silk and woollen carpets of the most exquisite colours, which are made at Herat, and which vary in price according to size and texture, from 10 to 1,000 rupees. The

most costly are seldom exported as the land transport of such goods is still very insecure.

Herat is considered the capital of the high table-land of Khorasan, although situated on the outer border of this mountain fastness. The political boundaries of Khorasan have never been clearly defined. But from its configuration and position, it has exercised for ages a peculiar influence upon the history of Western Asia.

The almost fabulous Mongolian hero, Oghus Khan, had long before Genghis-Khan, turned his arms against the "Northern citadel of Iran," (as Carl Ritter aptly styles it,) and had taken possession of the capital. At a later period, the terrible devistor Genghis-Khan gave his sons the task of conquering, and of maintaining their ground in Khorasan, whilst he and his hosts swept like a flight of voracious and destructive locusts over the ill-fated Iran, whose weak ruler was quite unequal to resist the impetuosity of the Mongolian invaders. Such historical tragedies have been repeated more than once, in later centuries, especially under Hulaku-Khan, and Timur. The Timurids called Khorasan the breast of Iran, against which the first attack should be directed.

In the last century, Nadir Schah, the greatest conqueror since the days of Cyrus and Xerxes, arose out of Khorasan, his native place, although the race of Affschar from which he sprung, dwelt principally in the province of Aserbeidschan in the West of Persia. This son of the sword, as he calls himself with the warriors of Khorasan, overcame the Turks, the Affghans, and the Hindoos. He carried on a bloody war of extermination, against the warlike races of the Eastern Caucasus, and penetrating into the very capital of the Great Mogul, overthrew his power upon the banks of the Indus, and the Ganges. At last, this ambitious conqueror met a similarly tragic end to that of so many other Persian Kings before him.

Feth-Ali-Schah has attempted to subdue and defend that important frontier land, by repeated expeditions against the Affghans, the Usbekhs, and the Turcomans, the table-land situated to the south west of the Paropamisus chain of mountains, being incessantly subjected to their plundering incursions. In 1832, an English traveller, Alexander Burnes, in going from Bokhara through Khorasan, found Abbas Mirza, the crown prince of Persia, governor of this

province, which he had reconquered by the help of those troops which had been organized and disciplined upon an European footing, and with which he endeavoured to guard it against the sudden attacks of its predatory neighbours. He had not ventured to push forward as far as Herat, being probably deterred from penetrating farther into the interior, by apprehension of the power of Affghanistan in Cabul and Candahar, which at that time was more feared in central Asia, than was that of the weak sovereign of Persia. During two hundred years from (1568 to 1785,) the Persians had undisputed possession of Herat. Upon the formation of the new power, the occupation of Herat, by Nadir Schah, was of short duration. After the dismemberment of Cabul, Kamran, one of the pretenders to the throne of Delhi, seized upon the town, and its surrounding territory. In 1838, the Persians undertook that well known expedition against him, which Russia approved and England disapproved. The Russian Ambassador accompanied the Persian army to the very walls of Herat, whilst the English Ambassador and the British military instructors left Persia.

Herat is one of the most important stations

on the route between Iran and Hindoostan ; the extreme fruitfulness of the province, making it a most agreeable halting place, both for the peaceful merchant, and for the invading army. The importance of this town and province, both on account of their position, as well as their beauty and fruitfulness, have for many centuries excited the envy of Mongolian, Persian, and Affghan conquerors. The direct road from Herat to Cabul across the passes of the Paropamisus chain, and through the land of the wild tribes of the Eimak and Hegareh, is only practicable for small detachments. Sultan Baber, the renowned author and commander, has given a fearful description of the difficulties and dangers which he once encountered on this route. The great high road from Persia through Herat, Candahar, Ghasna, to Cabul, extends a distance of eighty five geographical miles, and offers nowhere any difficulties to an army. A caravan makes the distance between Herat and Cabul in from thirty to forty days—and a body of well mounted riders can, by forced marches, do it in eleven days.

Watering-places and stations are found all along the road, but houses and large towns, the

residences of petty princes or governors are few, and far between, like the blooming oases of the great desert of Sahara.

This road and district have always remained the great channel of land communication with India, and in spite of the circumnavigation of the Cape, they still retain considerable importance. Before that event, Cabul and Candahar were regarded as the gates of India, and the road in question, as the only access to its fertile territory. In fact, since time immemorial, trade has remained faithful to this high road, which has accordingly been the centre of attraction for all robber hordes.

Even if the political relations of Asia were now what they were a hundred years ago, the direction of the channel, and the position of these countries, would be a matter of indifference. Conquest has always been a matter of ebb and flood in this part of Asia, which from the time of Xerxes to that of Paskiewitsch, has been subordinate to the destinies of the great neighbouring empires. Now as always, the fate of Central Asia hangs on the rivalry of two vast conflicting empires, at the opposite extremities of the hemisphere.

The petty contests of Tartar princes have now sunk into insignificance, and it is not impossible that the descendants of the Huns and Timur, will never rise again to a formidable attitude and importance. The same remark applies to all these intermediate states. The progeny of Genghis have become common highwaymen, the splendour of Affghanistan is a fable, and Persia bends its head humbly to the beck and nod of its relentless Northern neighbour.

Since the fatal experience of the Affghan campaign, England has given up all thoughts of contests beyond the Indus. It was a great mistake to bring the gentle vegetarians of the Ganges, into collision with the hardy Mohammedian clans of the Khyber Pass. In their time of trial, the red-coats and Hindoos would have preferred a few Circassian skirmishers to all our wooden walls. The attempt, in fact, was too remote from the sea, the great centre of British power.

All who compare the relative position of Russia and England in Asia, cannot doubt that victory will evidently incline to the former. Great Britain must remain on the defensive,

within the limits of her productive and wealthy peninsula. All conquests in that quarter from Alexander to Nadir, have emanated from the north.*

Russia has made immense, and apparently unproductive efforts to subdue the Caucasus, and absorb Central Asia. Her great sacrifices must have a great motive; no less than the ultimate incorporation of India.

Whenever an ambitious Russian emperor sways the sceptre, he can force Persia, in her present prostrate condition, to give up Gilan, Masanderan, and Aserbeidschan. We have already said, that multitudes of Russian nobles were indignant at Nicholas not having claimed

* Russia has two modes of procedure in conquering Asia. Gradual encroachment or sudden springs. The former is the safest and most certain. By assimilation she has already absorbed vast tribes of nomads, and an endless population of horsemen, besides the Cossacks. By carrying on this system she can, in time, absorb the Koords, Affghans, &c., carrying the caravan road to India, and launch a vast host of Mahomedan cavalry against Hindooostan. She has, already, a cavalry force of 300,000 men at her command, which, though not regular troops, would do her good service in Asia; and there can be no doubt, that by this gradual process of encroachment, she would reach the Punjaub and the Hindoo Koosh in half a century.

more from Persia, after the victories of Paskiewitch. Nicholas does not seem to have aimed at the character of a great Oriental conqueror. His thoughts were more absorbed by the West, and he appeared satisfied with his palaces on the foggy Neva. He preferred crushing democracy in the West, to enacting the part of Great Mogul in the East, or taking vengeance on Lord Palmerston's propagandism, by hurling the red-coats into the Indian ocean.

But rulers and dynasties change, and a successor of Nicholas may act differently. Russia has it in her power, either to encroach and absorb gradually, the intermediate states of Central Asia, or by a bold dash to seize her victims. The former is probably the wiser plan, and carried out by the vigorous arm of a Yermolof, and the crafty diplomacy of her golden agents, it is probable that she would attain her object more easily in this way, than by grasping suddenly at her victims. The Shah and Cabul chiefs would be certain to yield to her menaces or bribes, and smooth her gradual advance to India. But in case of resistance, they would be reduced at once, and in the present state of Asia, a few years would

suffice to pave the way for a Russian invasion of India.

All who know Russia, admit that she has attained a greater military power under Nicholas, than under any previous ruler. There is no second example in history of so vast a power, with a deified ruler, and a slavishly obedient people organized into a vast camp, furnished with all the appliances and contrivances of civilization, wielded for destructive and ambitious purposes. Sesostris, Timur, Attila, had no such means at their disposal. The Marquis of Custine thinks that the Sultan, the Emperor of China, and the Kubo of Japan, have not so despotic an authority over their subjects as the Czar. There is no limit to his power, he is adored by the serfs, and an insurrection of the nobles would be put down at once, by the sanguinary resistance of the peasants supporting the Crown. Any sacrifices would be made to secure Byzantium by this fanatical Russian race, whose patriotism is much more intense than that of the Western nations.

“L’empire du monde est devolu désormais non pas aux peuples turbulents, mais aux peuples patients.” Such was the prophecy of a

clever French legitimist, uttered at Moscow, at the sight of the wonderful and terrible passive obedience of this race of slaves, worshipping their chains, and *ivre d'esclavage*. This stern advocate of absolutist principles, was actually outraged at the sight of the utter prostration of humanity and dignity, exhibited by the grinding despotism of Muscovy, a power raised up, as he thinks, as a kind of scourge of God, for the punishment of our sins, and the purgation of nations sunk in luxury and effeminacy.

A similar opinion is uttered by Mickiewicz, who cautions the Western nations against slumbering whilst dangers and storms are preparing in the north. He warns them that the time is not yet come to convert their swords into ploughshares.

He considers the great secret of the rise of the Russian power to have consisted in the adoption of what he calls the Russian *tone*, or spirit, welding all its national elements into a colossal unity, organized for destructive and absorbing purposes, and converting the vast expanse of the empire into a great barrack. Peter the Great put the finishing stroke to the work, by the introduction of a German organi-

zation, but the real secret of the success of Russian encroachment is to be found in the adoption of the Mogul spirit, transmitted to the Romanoffs, and to modern times.

The slavic historian, whose views we are here analyzing, represents that Genghis-Khan, after having passed many days and nights in fasting and prayer, and in intercourse with spirits, descended from the table-land of Central Asia, to fulfill his mission. He declared himself appointed by Heaven as the scourge of men, and caused the terrible Tartar "Hallah," to resound and re-echo through two hemispheres. The history of that period, shows us the terror which then impressed the minds of men. It may be affirmed that the Mongolian spirit had a certain inexplicable influence, robbing its opponents of all confidence, and paralyzing all their actions. Their arms dropped from the hands of their warriors, and princes fled far away, to get out of hearing of the Tartar battle cries. The Grand Dukes of Muscovy, who were long subject to the Mongolian empire, ultimately acquired the same spirit, and when they commenced in their turn to shout " Hallah," first Russia, and afterwards its neighbours began

to shake and tremble. This is what Slavic writers have styled, the Russian spirit, or tone, which they regard as embodying the secret of the influence and power of Russia.

Ivan Vassiliewitch, surnamed the Terrible, a man of high reputation, and whose memory is venerated in Russia, understood how to carry out this spirit in a way, never before attempted, save among the Moguls. Hence, all that he attempted succeeded, hence, also he was one of the creators of the greatness of Russia, and he was able to accomplish things which Batu-Khan, Tamerlane, and Amurath had never ventured upon, and which Claudius or Nero had never conceived. Ivan had passed half his life in what he called a "convent," surrounded by monsters, he had invented every imaginable torture for his faithful subjects, and he had devised plans of putting to death thousands, and hundreds of thousands of nobles and plebeians, in the most exquisite torments, inventing and executing every kind of infernal cruelty, with a sort of humorous spirit. And yet Ivan Vassiliewitch was more popular with, and beloved by all classes, than most princes have been. When he died, he was wept by the whole nation. On hearing the

intelligence, the entire population of Moscow ran about the streets, lamenting and shedding tears, and howling in despair at their loss. Even the families of his victims were inconsolable at his death, and clothed themselves in mourning attire. The Russian historian, Karamsin, who relates all the details of the history of Ivan, and supports them with historical evidence, lets his pen drop in amazement at this epoch in his country's annals. He does not know how to qualify his popularity and the fidelity of the Russian people to such a prince. But Adam Mickiewicz steps in and offers him this solution : that an instinctive and brutish adherence to the sceptre, unconnected with any feelings prevalent throughout the rest of Europe, passed from the Moguls into the Russian character, and hence, that the Muscovites crowd round their leader, like a tabun of wild steppe horses round their stallion leader. For it is well known, that the whole herd follows its patriarch blindly, and when he falls, not knowing how to proceed, is scattered in all directions at random.

Subsequent centuries have not produced any ruler to rival Ivan, in developing and directing the Russian spirit ; but all recent Russian

monarchs have inherited something of his spirit, especially Peter the Great, who, however, made a few alterations in it, and smote the Strelitzes, whom Ivan had raised to power. The instruments and influences which roused the early Slavi to action, such as the Lithuanian Horns and the Mongolian Hallas, have been latterly supplanted by the ukase. This word has now the same magic effect on the Northern Slavi. It palsies them with fear, or drives them onwards ; it does not suffer the Russians to remain inclosed within the geographical limits of their State ; they must be thrown upon the Tartars and Circassians ; they must advance to the Danube or the Oxus ; they are forced to march against Teheran or Constantinople. The spirit of the ruler holds sway ; it is the motive and the object of every action. All the living *must serve*. Servitude has become the order of the day. Any family in Russia, which has not, for several generations, served the state, and which, therefore, has acquired no "Tchin," or rank, is known to be deprived of the titles of nobility, and degraded to the level of the serf. Even the greatest poets of Russia, like its greatest heroes and generals, have invariably written and acted in conformity with

this peculiar, energetic, and terrible spirit. Derjavin has rivalled Puschkin, and Zizianoff has emulated Suwaroff, in this respect; nor can it be denied that they obtained important results with it. Even the most intelligent adherents of constitutional forms, and of democracy, must grant a certain power to absolutism, which freedom and enthusiasm cannot always supply. The unlimited despot is able to wring sacrifices from his people, to carry out his vast views or ambitious projects, which place resources in his hand often greater, even in a poor country like Russia, than those resulting from the free-will offerings of patriotism in countries like England or America. Patriotism commonly flags, and is silenced by natural egotism, when men are required to offer their last penny, and their last drop of blood on the altar of their country. This selfishness of the majority, which is much more deeply rooted in old countries than among youthful and rising states, can perhaps only be effectually subdued by this terrible Russian spirit, as Mickiewicz calls it, though it may emanate from an Ivan or a Robespierre.

Mighty England, notwithstanding her great-

ness and prosperity, is not in a condition to present the same extreme and compulsory powers of resistance as Russia. Her European troops in India, scarcely amount to 45,000 men, and, accordingly, do not exceed one-sixth of the three armies of Bombay, Madras, and Bengal, which, including the detachments at Hyderabad and in the Punjab, present a united force of 264,000 men. In these three armies, the proportion of British to native regiments is 6 to 252. The royal troops form a special corps of 30,000 men. The total number of British military, under the orders of the Governor-General of Calcutta, scarcely amount to one-third of the Russian force assembled in and around the Caucasus, and on the Persian frontier. Our reliance on the fidelity, obedience, and bravery of the Sepoys, depends, moreover, entirely on the maintenance of that kernel of British troops. In all battles and hardships, the English must lead the way. The power of England in India was founded exclusively by English troops, and all competent judges admit, that it can only be preserved by them.

The corps of British officers in India is

admirable. Leopold Von Orlich, an excellent judge of military matters, who has written a valuable work of travels on India, affirms that this numerous corps of officers (820 staff and 5,500 subalterns) has not its equal in the world, as regards spirit and practical ability, and that he has not found so much mutual self-denial in officers and soldiers, in any army, as in that of British India. A healthy spirit, love of action, feeling of independence, self-reliance, and sound practical sense, are peculiar characteristics of English officers.

But notwithstanding all the efficiency of the corps of officers, and of the Indian establishments, the numerical disproportion between the European and the native troops is too great to afford a sufficient guarantee of stability and duration to the British sway. Only about 45,000 Europeans rule over 100,000,000 Asiatics in Hindoostan. Hitherto, indeed, England has issued victorious from every struggle, except in the Afghan war. But the real trial of her strength will be when she has to contend, not with the Sikhs and Mahrattas, but with a colossal power and a mighty conqueror on Indian ground. When the destructive dis-

tempers that yearly decimate our hosts are backed by the gaps that would be made in the British ranks by the lancers of the steppe, and by Russian bullets, it is doubtful if the obedience of the Sepoys would endure very long. The Mohammedan Sepoys are, moreover, much less reliable than their Hindoo comrades. Nor is it impossible that they will prove very refractory in the next struggle.

Orlich states, that the Mohammedans of India, wherever they are scattered, and however they are engaged, belong to one large family, closely cemented by the tie of religion, and prepared to defend their faith to the utmost. Faith and government are one in Mohammedan states; nor will they ever forget that their power was overthrown by the British in India. The eyes of all Mohammedans, in every part of India, will be directed to the man who preaches a crusade against the infidel. Symptoms of this feeling have been detected even in the army. I admit that Orlich adds, that owing to the excellent discipline of the Indian army, a defection of the Mohammedans would be very difficult, so long as no great power appears on the scene to assist them. But the very exis-

tence of this rebellious tendency is a formidable symptom, coupled with the aggressive attitude of Russia in Asia.

All who know the situation of affairs there, must be aware that nothing can secure British supremacy in India, save an energetic support from home. Even the last war on the Sutlej was a severe trial for the British Generals. The soldiery of Runjeet Singh, though deprived of the supervision of that judicious Prince, and disorganized since the departure of the European drill inspectors, opposed a resistance to the British arms, such as they had not encountered since Tippoo Saib. It was only after the most sanguinary strife, that victory inclined to the British side. If a heavy blow from a foreign power were added to severe intestine disturbances, a catastrophe could scarcely be avoided. The victory would be much more dubious in a conflict with a power which can send into the field a cavalry force more than twice as strong as the entire British Indian army, including all arms and branches of the service. Nor would Russia be deterred by the loss of one army, for her steppes and military colonies offer inexhaustible storehouses

of soldiers. A command from the banks of the Neva would call new hordes from the Ukraine to the Kirghis steppes—vast masses grasping the musket and crossing the saddle to carry out the Russian spirit. The bam-bam-magadu of the Sepoys, on the blooming banks of the Indus, would meet with a response in the Mongolian hurrah and hallah, and it is doubtful if the melodious cheer of the Indian mercenaries would not fade away before the rough shouts of the northern barbarians.

A heavy loss of European troops would involve the dissolution of the Indian army. The destruction of 30,000 royal red-coats would seal the fate of the empire. The European regiments are the corner stone of that fabulous fabric, sheltering a hundred million of men. The Sepoy is only a mercenary, to whom all Christians, be they English or Muscovites, appear unclean, but who serves them faithfully as long as he finds them the stronger party, and whilst they leave the Hindoo religion and castes untouched. But the Sepoy would just as readily sell his services to the Emperor of Russia for nine rupees per month, and would serve him as bravely as the Queen of England, of whom

he is equally ignorant. The Sepoy is ignorant of politics and history ; he only knows Brahma, his caste and his family. It is a matter of perfect indifference to him whether his sovereign and viceroy speak English or Russian, dwells in London or Petersburg, and are limited by a parliament, or issue absolute decrees.

Let us sum up in a few words, the state of affairs in Central Asia. Russia is on Asiatic ground, her proper element, like England on the ocean, invulnerable ; nay, almost intangible, Her heel of Achilles stands on European soil, near the Vistula, but it is guarded by the thickest chain armour. Russia will never be exposed to an aggressive war, on the part of England, in Asia. Her frontiers on this side are alike protected by steep hill forts, inhospitable wastes and steppes, and the warlike spirit and countless cavalry of her border population. Russia would have fewer impediments in a march to India, than all former conquerors who have taken this direction. Alexander, Timur, and Nadir Shah were forced to beat down much greater resistance than that which could now be opposed to a Russian invading army, by the weakened, disorganized and impotent central

states. A Russian expedition against British India would be probably supported by the Kings of Persia and Cabul, because they know that they are at the mercy of Russia, and feel that they have no choice but to join the conqueror, or be trampled under foot. The natural impediments to such an expedition would be unimportant to Russia, and an alliance with the intermediate states, would diminish the obstacle of distance in space.

An Emperor of Russia having the control over the property and lives of sixty millions of subjects, accustomed to Slavonic obedience, could lead across the Indus, hosts that would not be numerically inferior to the united Indo-British forces of Bombay, Madras and Bengal, and which would have the immeasurable advantage of consisting almost entirely of Great Russians, whereas only a very small body of our Indian army is native British. The Moslem elements of a Russian invading army, would also be of incalculable value, as instruments in countries, whose Mahommedan population still regret the loss of power, and retain a spirit of revenge against their British masters.

But the real superiority of Russia is derived

from the elasticity, self-denial, patience, and endurance of an empire with a military organization, under the most unlimited of all despots. The Briton carries on war only so long as it redounds to his advantage; the Russian fights so long as the Emperor bids him. England gave up the contest in North America, and recognized the independence of her former colony, when she saw, that even in the event of her recovering it, the advantage would be overbalanced by the losses of an exhausting war. All the oratorical powers of the high Tories in Parliament were not able to prevent the recognition of America's independence. Afghanistan was also evacuated by the English, when they saw that this country would not yield an equivalent for the sacrifice of blood and treasure, that must be made to retain it. Russia has continued steadily her contest with the mountaineers of the Caucasus for the last sixty years, not because it is demanded by interests of State, but because it is the will of its Emperor, who is not responsible to any ministry, or hampered by any parliament, and whose ambitious projects are not counterbalanced by any opposition in the State. England's power, is strong, like

manhood, and transient as life ; Russia's power, to use the words of a French orator, "is vast as space and patient as time."

Since the period of my journey, the Turks have made a victorious campaign in Koordistan. Omar Pacha was the life and soul of the Turkish camp, and his sagacious tactics succeeded in driving the mighty Beder-Khan, the persecutor of the Nestorians, out of his mountains, and eventually in capturing him. This was a heavy blow to the Koordish power, south of Lake Van. Even the savage Hakkari Koords, humbly supplicated the mercy of the conqueror. The recollection of the chastisement which they received will last some years. The tribes will remain quiet for a season, nor will their chieftains attempt any open mutiny against the authorities of the Porte. But the people will continue as of yore ; nomadic, thievish, regarding themselves as free, and their own masters in the mountains, and despising the authority of the Turkish governors. The presence of this numerous, warlike and refractory people will be a constant source of danger to the Porte, in connection with the increasing depopulation, and impoverishment of the cities, and the progressive

deterioration of Asiatic Turkey. There can be no other fortune in store for Anatolia, save that of falling into complete dissolution and anarchy, and becoming a prey to independant, barbarous chieftains, or of being incorporated as a supplement to the Northern Giant, whose pressure will be tamely born by the cowardly Armenian, and the Turk of the towns, whilst the Koords will perhaps repeat the part of the Circassians, displaying less heroism, but the same stubborn endurance ; and inflamed by still greater Mohammedan fanaticism, and hatred of Christians, they may prolong the tragedy to the end of this century.

I admit that the prospects of the East, defy all calculation, because unforeseen accidents and the possible rise of great men, who make an epoch in history, may lie beyond our present political horizon. Moreover, the basis of both the great powers of Asia, rests on European ground. As their centre of gravity is thus inclosed within the circle of our political convulsions, vibrations proceeding from the centre may be traced to the circumference. Thus a flash emanating to-morrow, from the banks of the Seine, may find a responsive echo to its

accompanying thunder, on the Bosphorus and Indus, as well as on the Thames and Neva. But the momentous question perplexing all far-seeing minds, from morning to night is, whether after all clouds are dispersed on the old continent, the sun is destined to irradiate a refreshed and invigorated earth, or to shine fitfully on nought but ruins and corruption.

THE END.

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